CHATURANG KATHA

HAMSAVALI

No. 502 PICTORIAL CLASSICS FOR YOUNG AND OLD Rs. 2.50

CHATURANG KATHA

The *Kathasaritsagara* was written in the 11th century by Somadeva, the court poet of Kashmir. It is an ocean comprising a myriad streams of story, hence the title *Kathasaritsagara,* which literally means 'Ocean of streams of story'.

The form of the *Kathasaritsagara* is itself fascinating. One story leads to another and another, endlessly for almost every character is a compulsive story-teller. The reader is led into a world peopled by wise men and fools, good men and thieves, lovers and sages, gods, demons, magic, chicanery and intrigue. The sweep of the *Kathasaritsagara* is as vast as life itself. In these stories is embodied the wisdom of the east, its way of life, its way of looking at men and matters.

The story of Hamsavali is a simple story of the love of a beautiful princess for a handsome prince. They are made to fall in love, brought together and then face obstacles thrown in their path by a seemingly wilful fate.

CHATURANG KATHA brings you many more stories from this ancient Indian classic which has kept readers all over the world enthralled.

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Published by H. G. Mirchandani for India Book House Pvt. Ltd., Rusi Mansion, 29 Wodehouse Road, Bombay 400 039 and printed by him at IBH Printers, Marol Naka, Mathuradas Vasanji Road, Andheri East, Bombay 400 059.

HAMSAVALI

KING MEGHAMALI OF VIDISHA HAD A BEAUTIFUL AND ACCOMPLISHED DAUGHTER, HAMSAVALI.

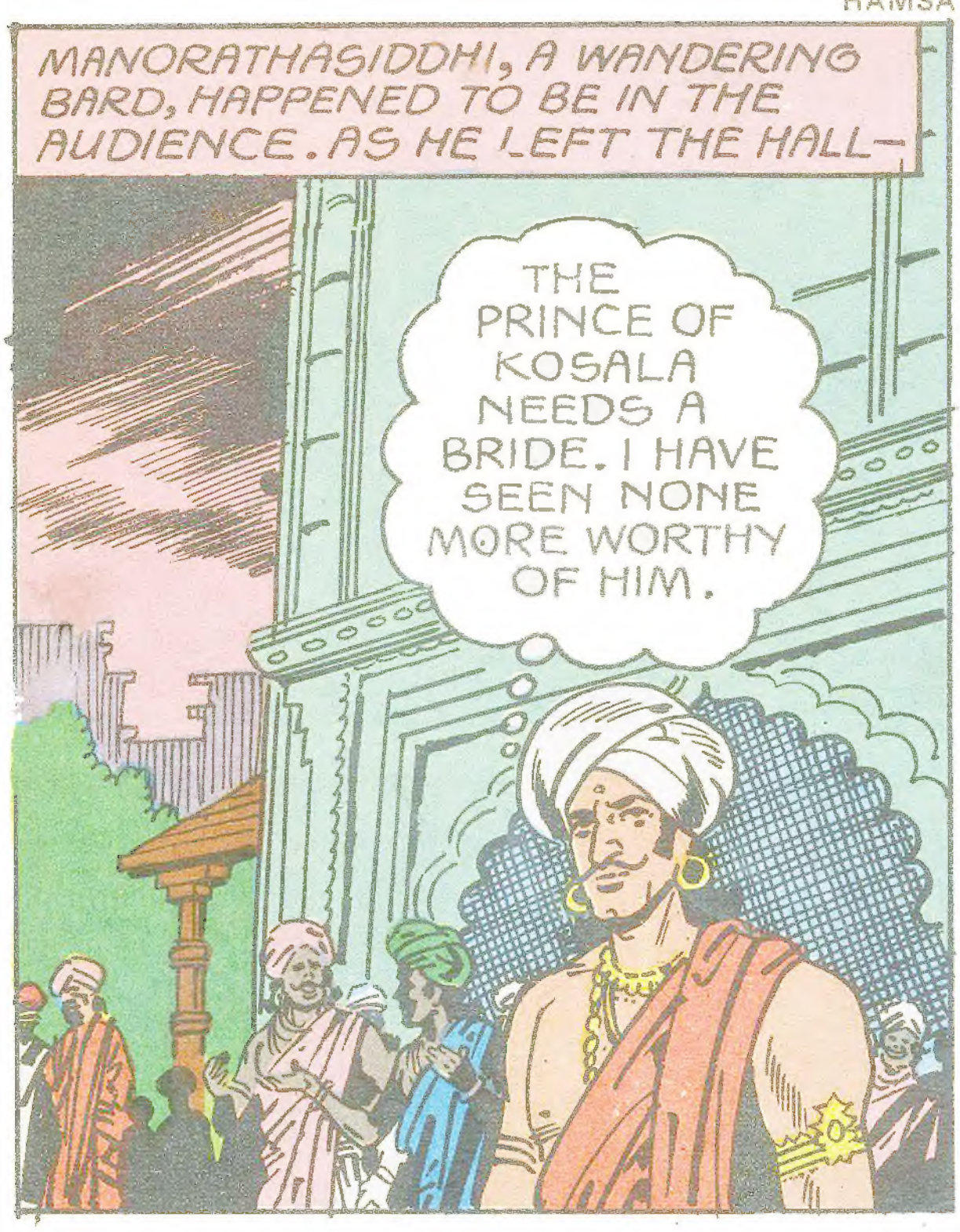
HAMSAVALI WAS ADEPT IN THE ART OF DANCING. HER TEACHER, PLEASED WITH HER PROGRESS, SOUGHT AUDIENCE WITH THE KING.

MY LORD, HAMSAVALI IS NOW READY TO PERFORM BEFORE YOU AND THE COURT.

TOMORROW WE WILL GATHER IN THE ROYAL DANCE HALL.

THE NEXT DAY, THEY TOOK THEIR PLACES IN A PACKED HALL. HAMSAVALI ENTERED AND BOWED TO THE AUDIENCE.

THE DANCE COMMENCED. HAMSAVALI SWAYED TO THE MUSIC. HER FEET BEAT OUT THE INTRICATE RHYTHMS FAULTLESSLY. HER HANDS TRACED EXQUISITE PATTERNS IN THE AIR. HER FACE REFLECTED THE MYRIAD EMOTIONS OF THE BEAUTIFUL SONG.


MANORATHASIDDHI, A WANDERING BARD, HAPPENED TO BE IN THE AUDIENCE. AS HE LEFT THE HALL—
THE PRINCE OF KOSALA NEEDS A BRIDE. I HAVE SEEN NONE MORE WORTHY OF HIM.

THAT NIGHT, MANORATHASIDDHI LAY IN BED, WIDE AWAKE.
I MUST BRING THE TWO TOGETHER. BUT HOW? A DIRECT APPROACH MIGHT SPOIL THINGS.

THE NEXT MORNING HE PUT UP A NOTICE ON THE PALACE WALLS, CHALLENGING THE PAINTERS OF THE TOWN.

THE CHALLENGE WENT UNANSWERED. THE KING HEARING OF IT, SUMMONED MANORATHASIDDHI.
YOU SHALL DECORATE MY DAUGHTER'S ROOM.
I AM GREATLY HONOURED.

MANORATHASIDDHI SET TO WORK. HE PAINTED A FAITHFUL LIKENESS OF KAMALAKARA AND HIS FOLLOWERS ON THE WALLS OF HAMSAVALI'S ROOM.

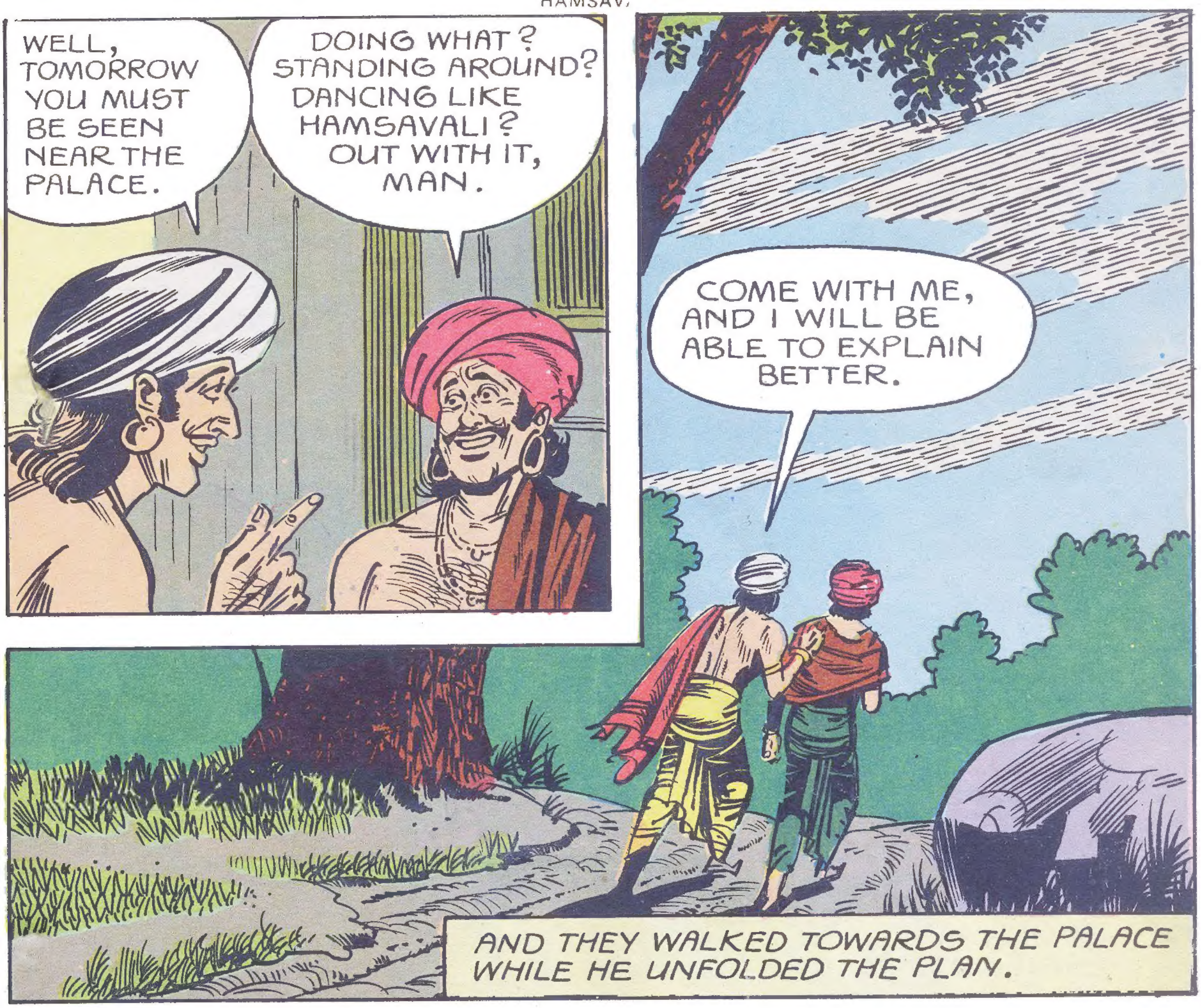
WHO IS THIS HANDSOME MAN, I WONDER!

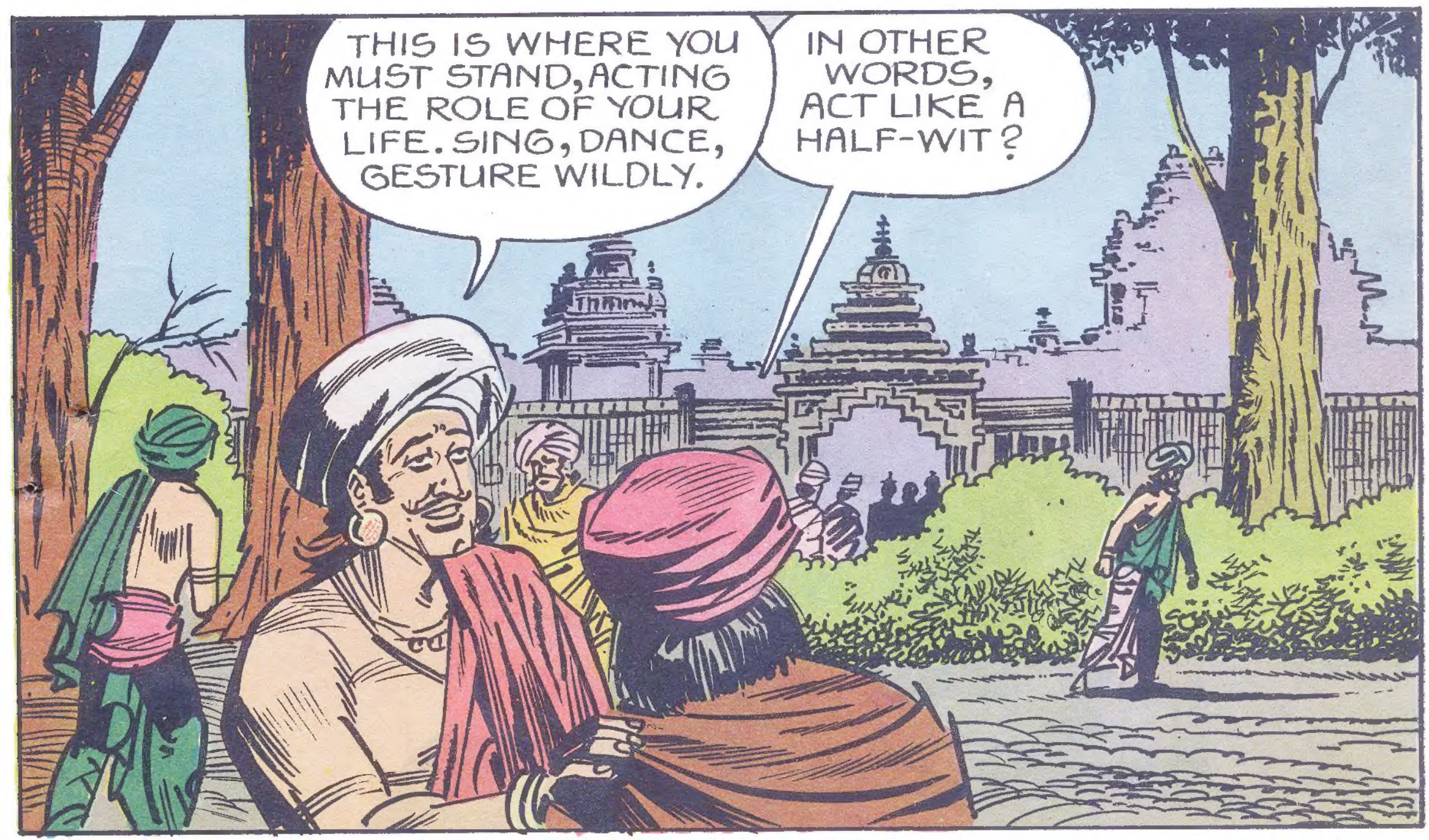
NOW, FOR THE SECOND PART OF MY PLAN.

HE WENT TO THE HOUSE OF A CLOSE FRIEND.

IF YOU VALUE OUR FRIENDSHIP...

HAVE I EVER GIVEN YOU CAUSE TO DOUBT IT?


WELL, TOMORROW YOU MUST BE SEEN NEAR THE PALACE.
DOING WHAT? STANDING AROUND? DANCING LIKE HAMSAVALI? OUT WITH IT, MAN.
COME WITH ME, AND I WILL BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN BETTER.
AND THEY WALKED TOWARDS THE PALACE WHILE HE UNFOLDED THE PLAN.

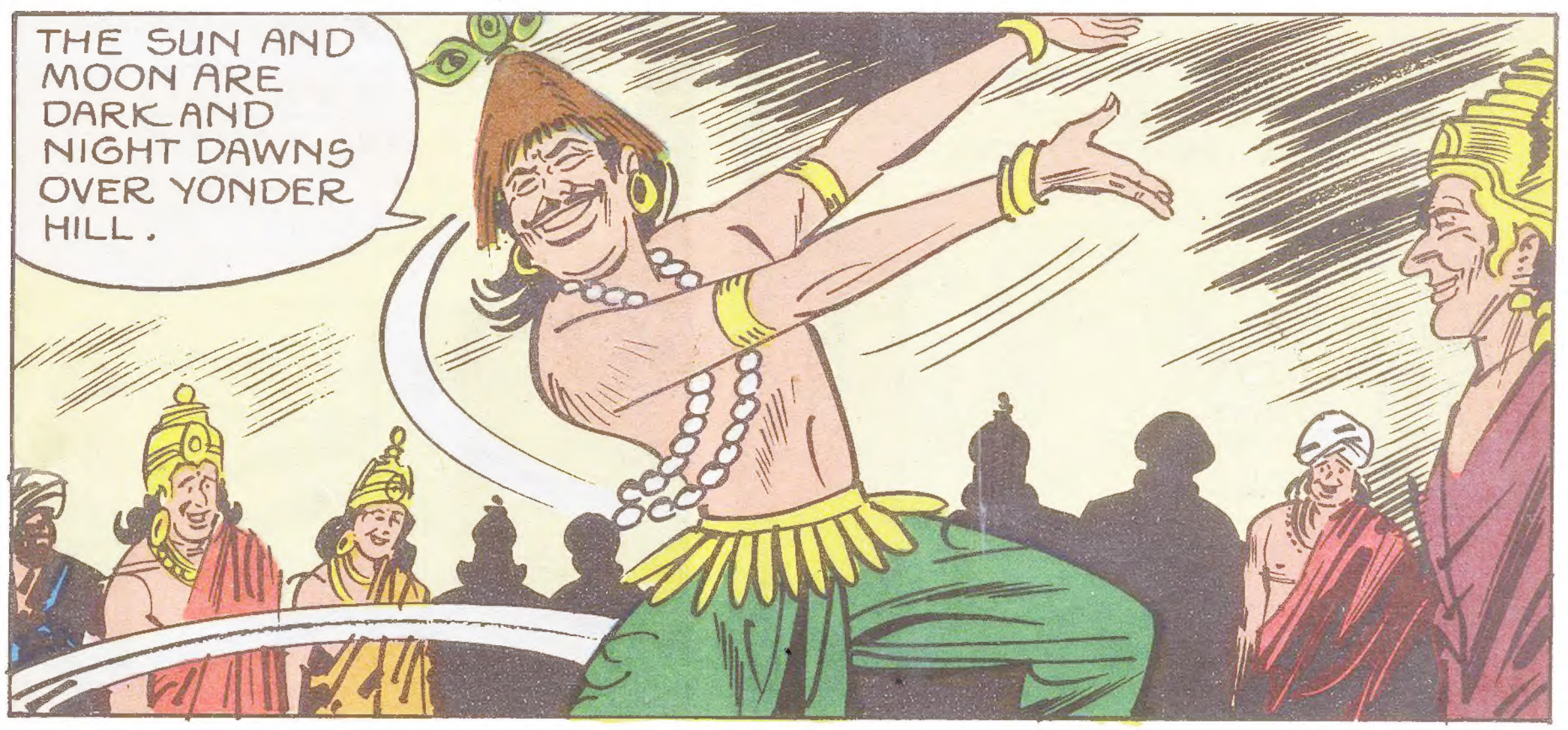

THIS IS WHERE YOU MUST STAND, ACTING THE ROLE OF YOUR LIFE. SING, DANCE, GESTURE WILDLY.
IN OTHER WORDS, ACT LIKE A HALF-WIT?

AT THE PALACE GATES, THE NEXT MORNING, THERE WAS A COMMOTION. THE PRINCES, WALKING IN THE GARDEN, WERE CURIOUS.

THAT MAN IS GESTICULATING WILDLY.

LET US WALK UP TO HIM.

AS THEY APPROACHED–
HE MUST THINK HE IS HAMSAVALI, THE WAY HE IS DANCING.
LISTEN TO HIS SONG. HE IS QUITE MAD.


THE SUN AND MOON ARE DARK AND NIGHT DAWNS OVER YONDER HILL.

THE PRINCES HAD HAD ENOUGH OF WALKING IN THE GARDEN.
LET US INVITE THE FELLOW IN. HE WILL HELP US WHILE AWAY A TEDIOUS MORNING.

AND SO HE WAS BROUGHT IN.

TELL US, GOOD FELLOW, HOW CAN NIGHT DAWN?

WHY, JUST AS THE FRUIT TURNS INTO FLOWER, AND THE FLOWER INTO BUD.

AND HE WENT ON, MAKING STATEMENT AFTER FUNNY STATEMENT, POSING RIDDLE AFTER CURIOUS RIDDLE.

MEANWHILE, HAMSAVALI SAT IN HER ROOM, LOST IN THOUGHTS OF THE HANDSOME YOUNG MAN PAINTED ON THE WALL.

COULD THIS BE LOVE? I CAN THINK OF NOTHING ELSE.

SUDDENLY, A MAID RUSHED IN.

PRINCESS, THE PRINCES ARE HAVING SUCH FUN! THERE IS A MAD FELLOW WITH THEM.

BRING HIM IN. HE MIGHT DISTRACT ME.

AND SO, MANORATHASIDDHI'S FRIEND FOUND HIMSELF IN HAMSAVALI'S ROOM, FACING THE PICTURE OF KAMALAKARA. HE WASTED NO TIME.

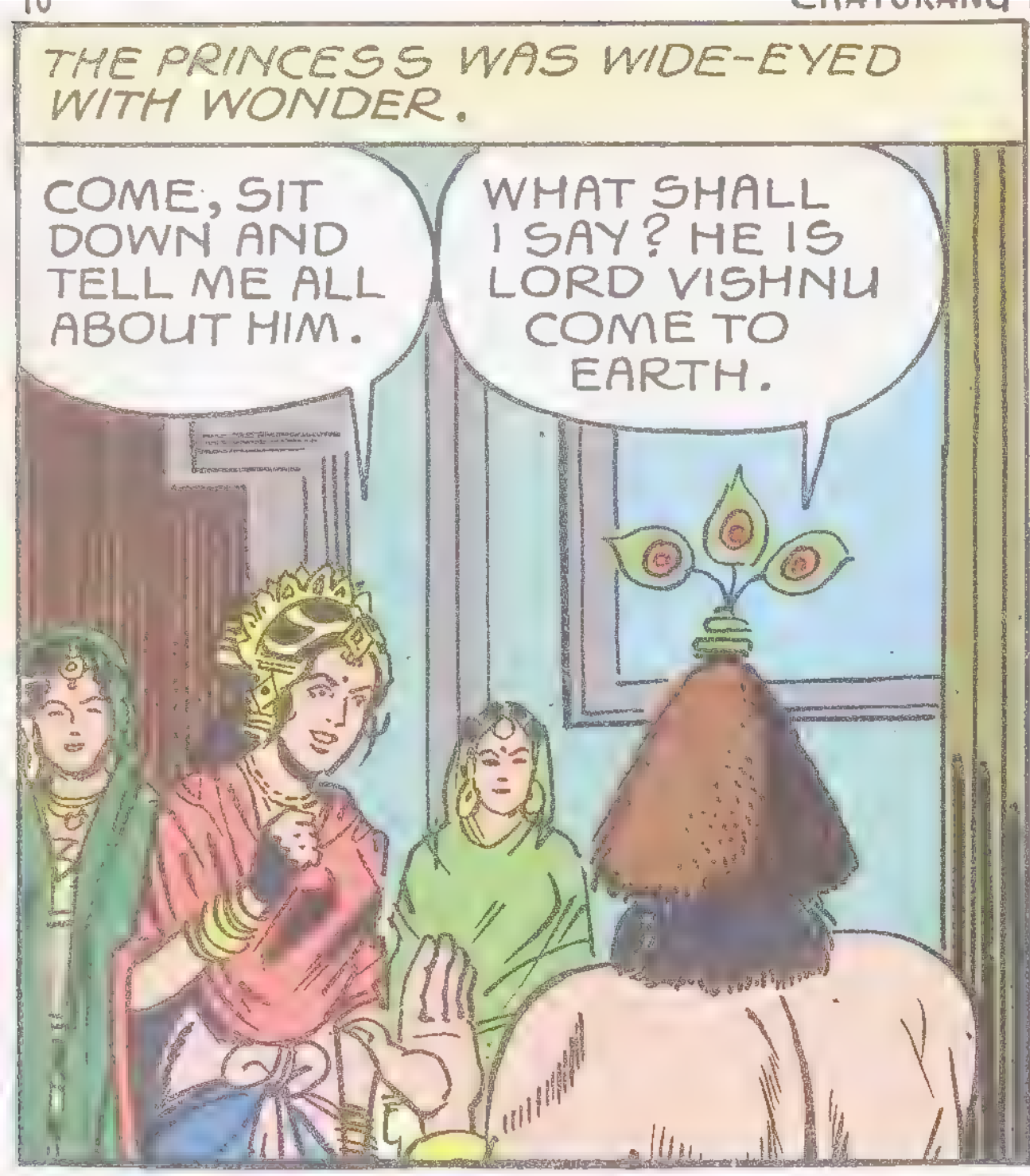
KAMALAKARA, THE PRINCE OF KOSALA!

DO YOU KNOW HIM?

MY EYES ARE BLESSED INDEED TO LOOK UPON HIM!

THAT IS HIGH PRAISE. SURELY YOU EXAGGERATE?

FAR FROM IT. WORDS FAIL ME WHEN I THINK OF HIM.


THE PRINCESS WAS WIDE-EYED WITH WONDER.
COME, SIT DOWN AND TELL ME ALL ABOUT HIM.
WHAT SHALL I SAY? HE IS LORD VISHNU COME TO EARTH.

HE DESCRIBED KAMALAKARA'S BEAUTY, HIS BRAVERY, HIS GENEROSITY, TELLING TALES THAT KEPT THE PRINCESS AND HER FRIENDS ENTRANCED.
IF ONLY I COULD BE HIS WIFE!

IN THE MEANTIME, ONE OF THE MINISTERS WENT TO THE KING.
MY LORD, YOU SHOULD PUT A STOP TO WHAT IS GOING ON IN HAMSAVALI'S ROOM.
YOU SEEM VERY AGITATED; LET US GO THERE IMMEDIATELY.

AND AS THEY WALKED TO THE PRINCESS'S APARTMENTS, THE MINISTER TOLD THE KING ALL ABOUT THE HALF-WIT WHO WAS PUTTING THOUGHTS OF LOVE INTO THE PRINCESS'S HEAD.

OUT WITH YOU! HOW DARE YOU ENTER MY DAUGHTER'S ROOMS?

AS THE YOUNG MAN LEFT—

MY WORK IS DONE. SHE IS WELL AND TRULY SMITTEN BY THE PANGS OF LOVE!

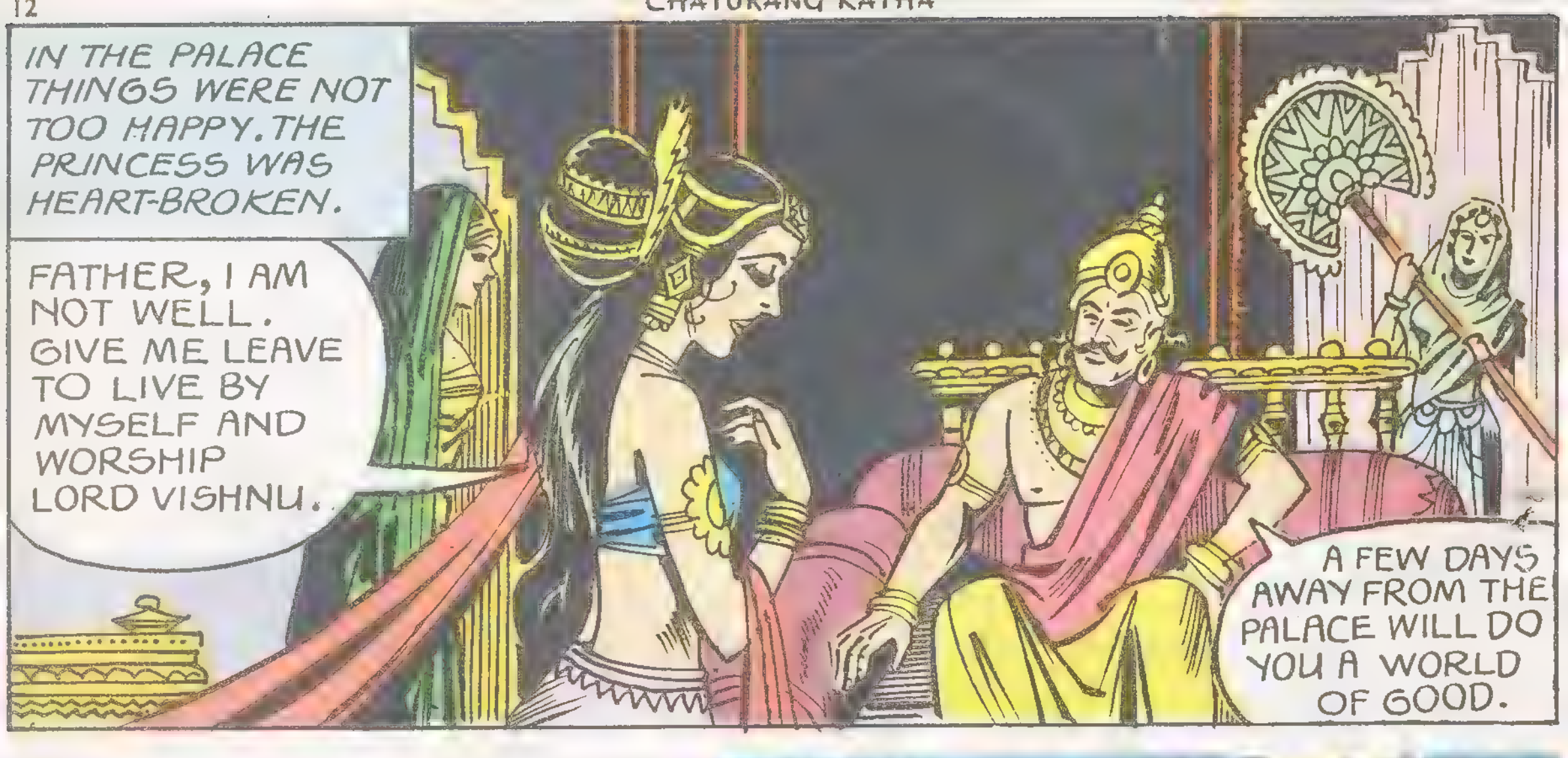
BACK IN HIS HOUSE, HE REPORTED THE WHOLE MATTER TO MANORATHASIDDHI.

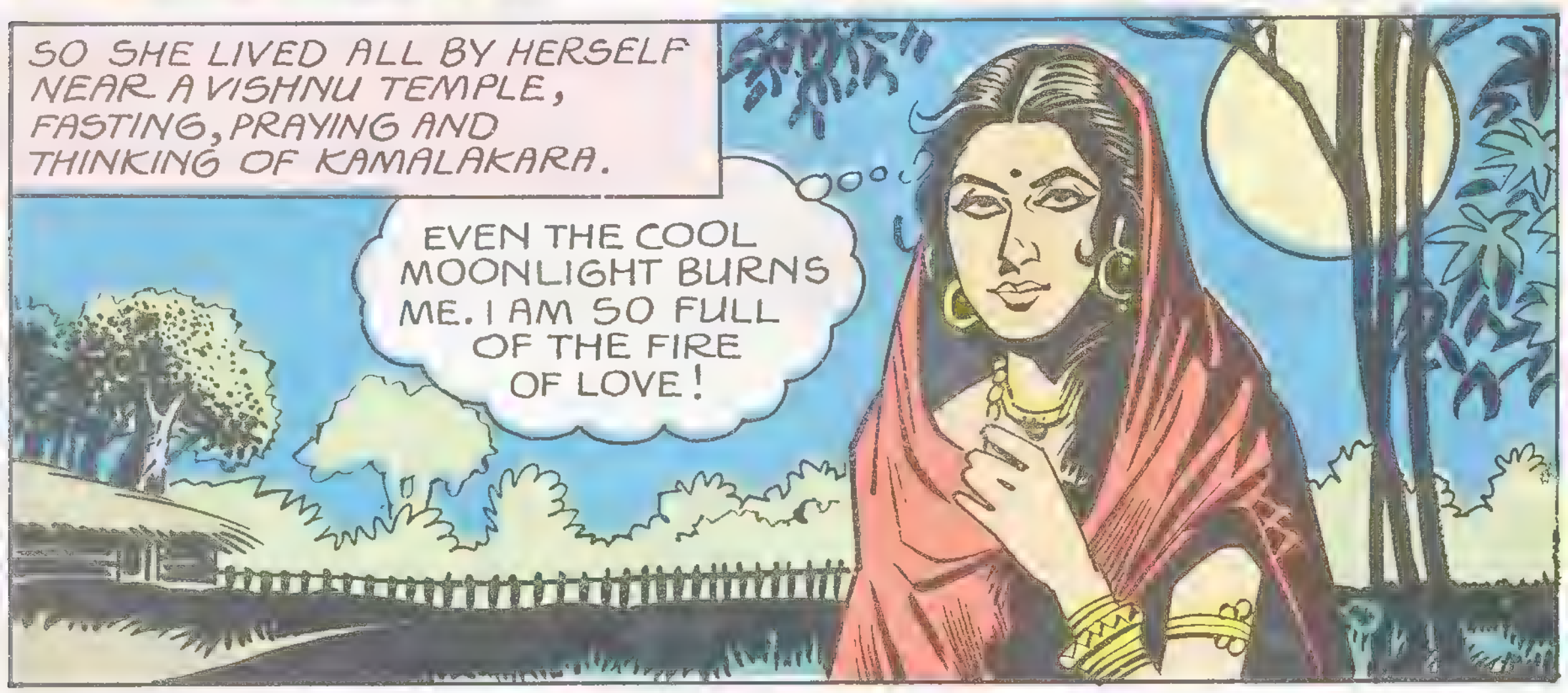
TELL ME, IS THE PRINCESS MADLY IN LOVE?

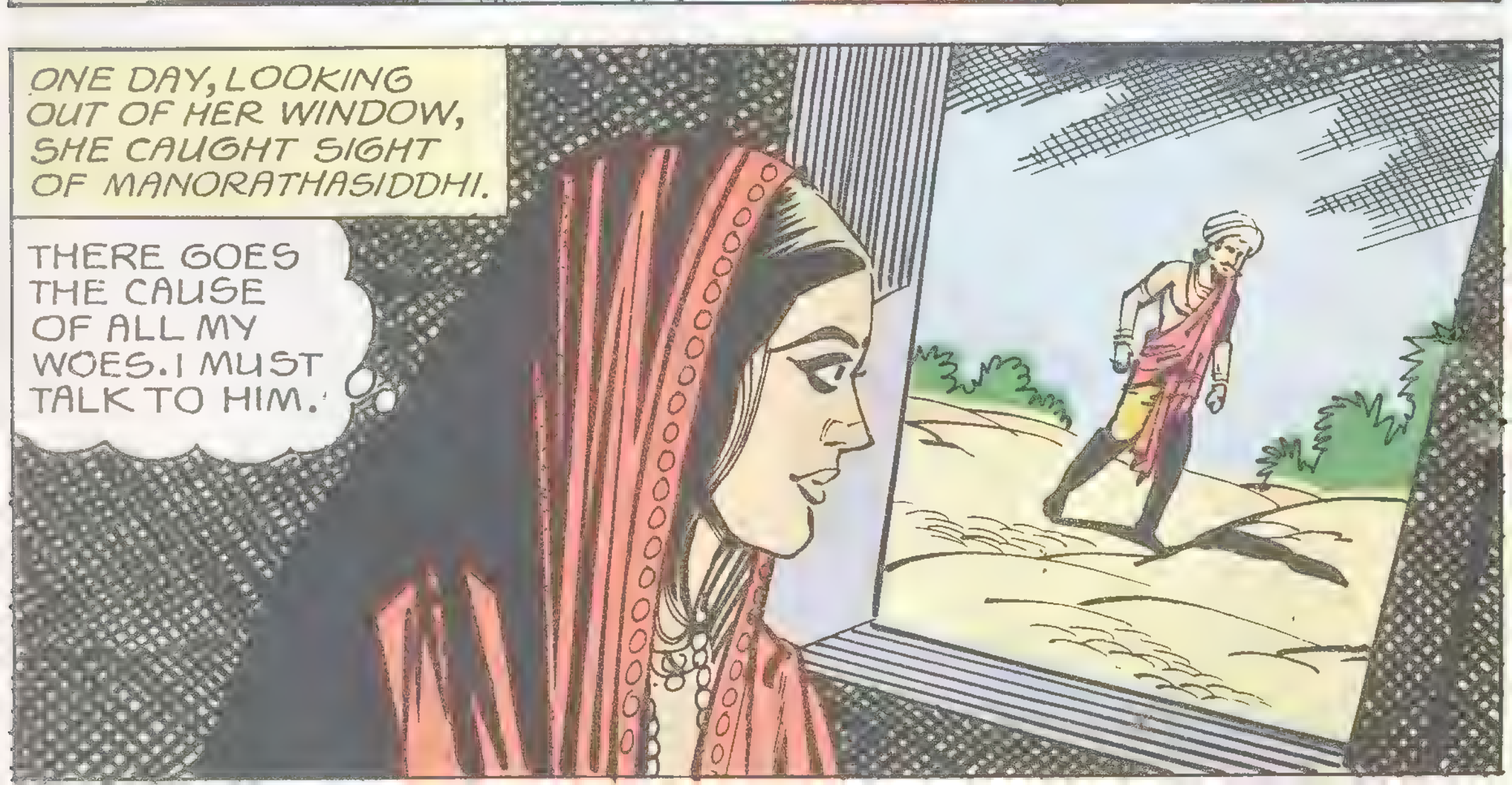
I SHOULD THINK SO. I HOPE HE LIVES UP TO ALL THAT HIGH PRAISE.

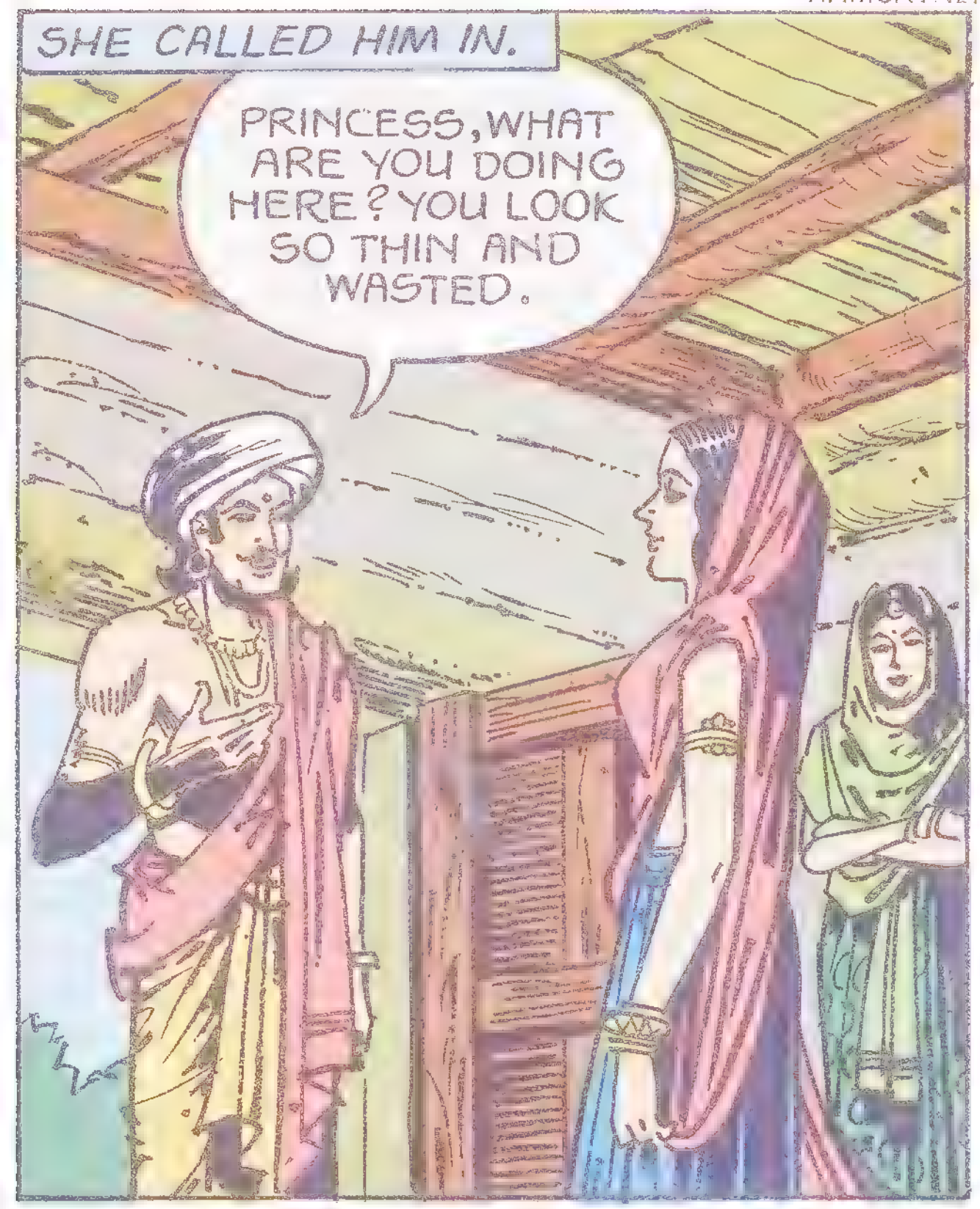
HE IS ALL YOU HAVE SAID, AND MORE.

WELL, SHE IS NO LESS. I COULD NOT TAKE MY EYES OFF HER.


IN THE PALACE THINGS WERE NOT TOO HAPPY. THE PRINCESS WAS HEART-BROKEN.
FATHER, I AM NOT WELL. GIVE ME LEAVE TO LIVE BY MYSELF AND WORSHIP LORD VISHNU.
A FEW DAYS AWAY FROM THE PALACE WILL DO YOU A WORLD OF GOOD.

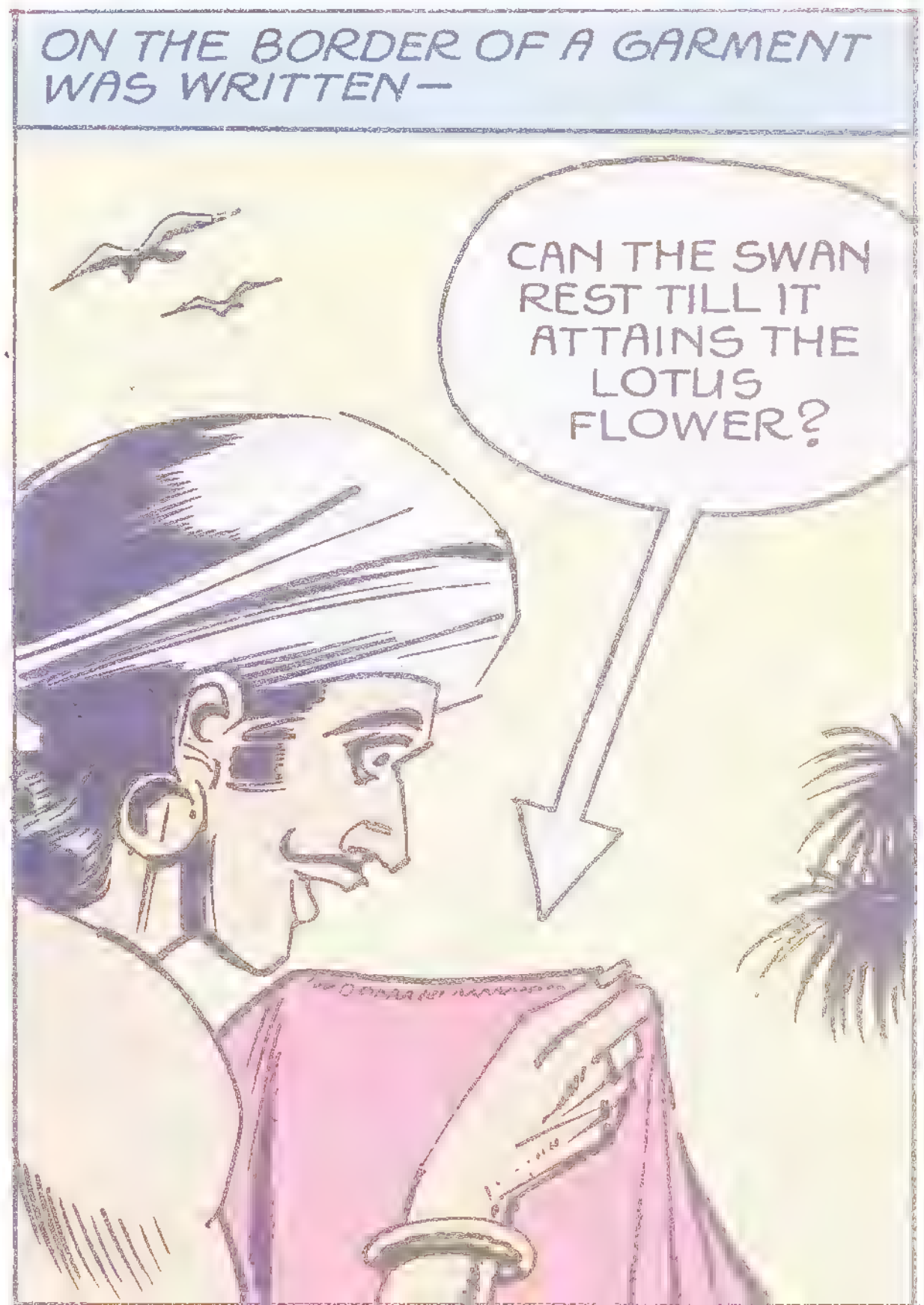

SO SHE LIVED ALL BY HERSELF NEAR A VISHNU TEMPLE, FASTING, PRAYING AND THINKING OF KAMALAKARA.
EVEN THE COOL MOONLIGHT BURNS ME. I AM SO FULL OF THE FIRE OF LOVE!


ONE DAY, LOOKING OUT OF HER WINDOW, SHE CAUGHT SIGHT OF MANORATHASIDDHI.
THERE GOES THE CAUSE OF ALL MY WOES. I MUST TALK TO HIM.


SHE CALLED HIM IN.
PRINCESS, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOU LOOK SO THIN AND WASTED.

I SPEND MY TIME PRAYING TO LORD VISHNU. HERE, TAKE THESE JEWELS AND CLOTHES. I HAVE NO NEED FOR THEM NOW.

AS HE SAT OUTSIDE, SORTING THE THINGS OUT—
WHAT'S HERE? A MESSAGE OF LOVE!


ON THE BORDER OF A GARMENT WAS WRITTEN—
CAN THE SWAN REST TILL IT ATTAINS THE LOTUS FLOWER?

MANORATHASIDDHI SECRETLY REJOICED. HE WENT TO KAMALAKARA WHO WELCOMED HIM.
CAN THE SWAN REST TILL IT ATTAINS THE LOTUS FLOWER?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, GOOD BARD?

THEREBY HANGS A TALE.
I AM CURIOUS TO HEAR IT.

MANORATHASIDDHI TOLD HIM OF HIS STAY IN VIDISHA, HIS ENCOUNTER WITH HAMSAVALI AND ALL THAT FOLLOWED.
MY DEAR PRINCE, SHE IS A POET'S DREAM. WHAT IS MORE, SHE LOVES YOU.

PRINCE KAMALAKARA WAS EAGER TO BE UNITED WITH HAMSAVALI. AFTER THE POET LEFT—
HOW SHOULD I SET ABOUT IT? THERE ARE SO MANY OBSTACLES IN MY PATH.

AS IT HAPPENED, HE DID NOT HAVE TO WAIT LONG. THE KING, HIS FATHER, SENT FOR HIM.

IT IS TIME YOU GAVE UP THIS LIFE OF EASE AND PLEASURE.

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO, FATHER?

ROUSE YOURSELF AND PROVE YOUR PROWESS IN BATTLE. THE KING OF ANGA MARCHES AGAINST US, I HEAR...

...AND YOU SHALL LEAD THE ARMIES OF KOSALA AGAINST HIM. I SHALL NOT BE WITH YOU.

I WILL DO MY BEST, FATHER.

THE PRINCE WELCOMED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE OUT OF HIS KINGDOM.

I WILL CONQUER ANGA, AND MOVE ON TO VIDISHA.

THE KING OF ANGA MET KAMALAKARA IN A FIERCE BATTLE. KAMALAKARA'S ARMY WAS VICTORIOUS.

MY FIRST BATTLE – A VICTORY!

THE KING OF ANGA WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE AND BOUND IN CHAINS.

TAKE HIM TO KOSALA AND INFORM MY FATHER THAT I AM MOVING ON TO FRESH CONQUESTS.

AS YOU SAY, MY LORD.

AND HE MARCHED TOWARDS VIDISHA, WINNING MANY BATTLES ON THE WAY. HIS ARMY GREW GREAT WITH CAPTURED ENEMY SOLDIERS.

I HAVE PROVED MY MIGHT. AND NOW TO VIDISHA!

HE STRUCK CAMP OUTSIDE VIDISHA. WHILE THE HORSES, ELEPHANTS AND SOLDIERS RESTED AND REFRESHED THEMSELVES...

...HE SENT FOR HIS AMBASSADOR.

GO TO KING MEGHAMALI. TELL HIM I COME IN PEACE AND WISH TO MARRY HIS DAUGHTER, HAMSAVALI.

ON RECEIVING HIS MESSAGE, KING MEGHAMALI WENT TO SEE HIM.

YOU NEED NOT HAVE TAKEN THE TROUBLE TO COME YOURSELF.

IT IS NO TROUBLE.

I AM IMPATIENT TO WED YOUR DAUGHTER.

KING MEGHAMALI BEGAN–

SOME TIME AGO, WHEN I LAY ILL WITH FEVER, I HAD A DREAM...

...LORD VISHNU APPEARED TO ME AND REVEALED TWO THINGS...

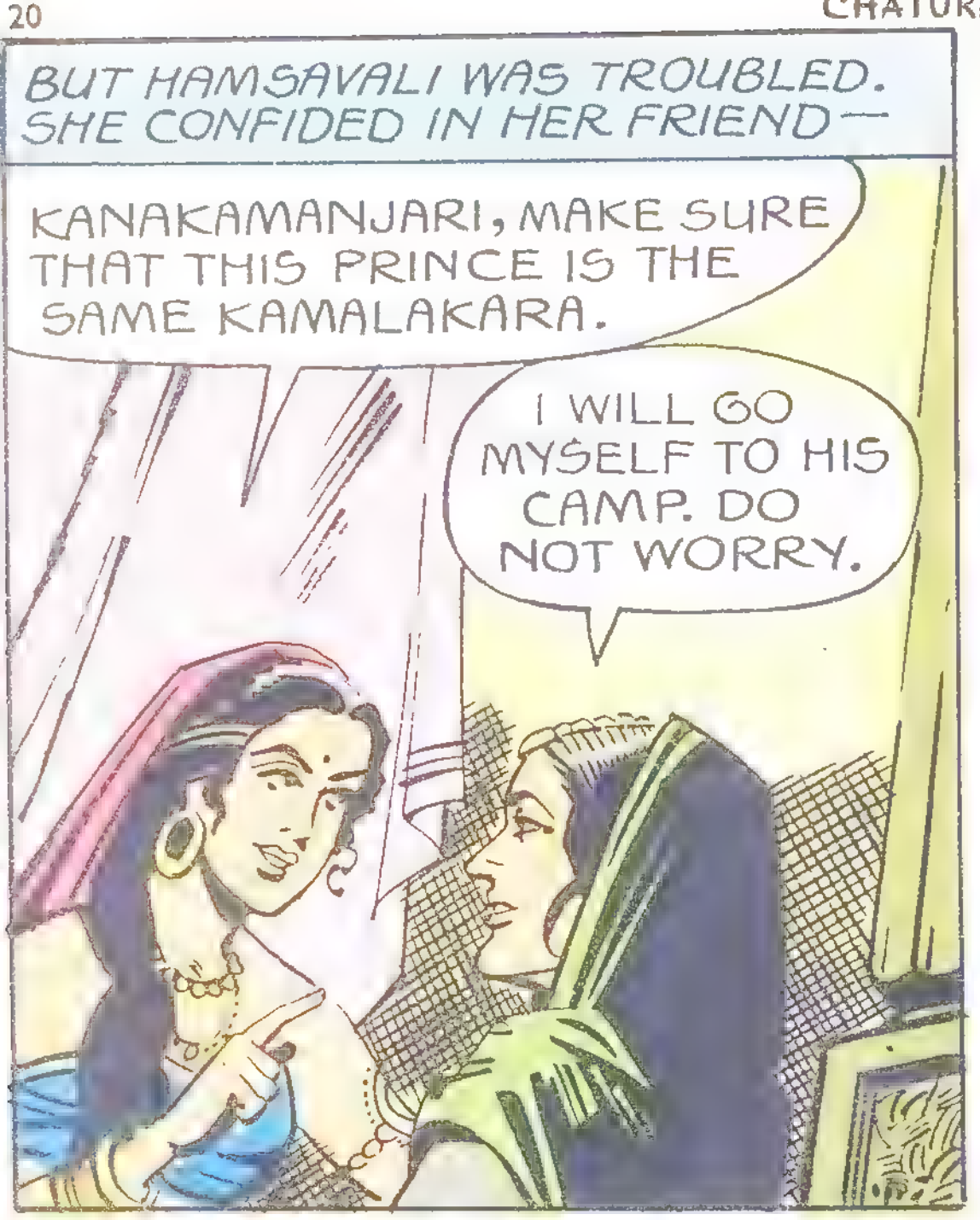
YES, GO ON.

THAT HAMSAVALI WOULD BE YOUR WIFE, AND THAT SHE IS GIFTED WITH THE HEALING TOUCH...

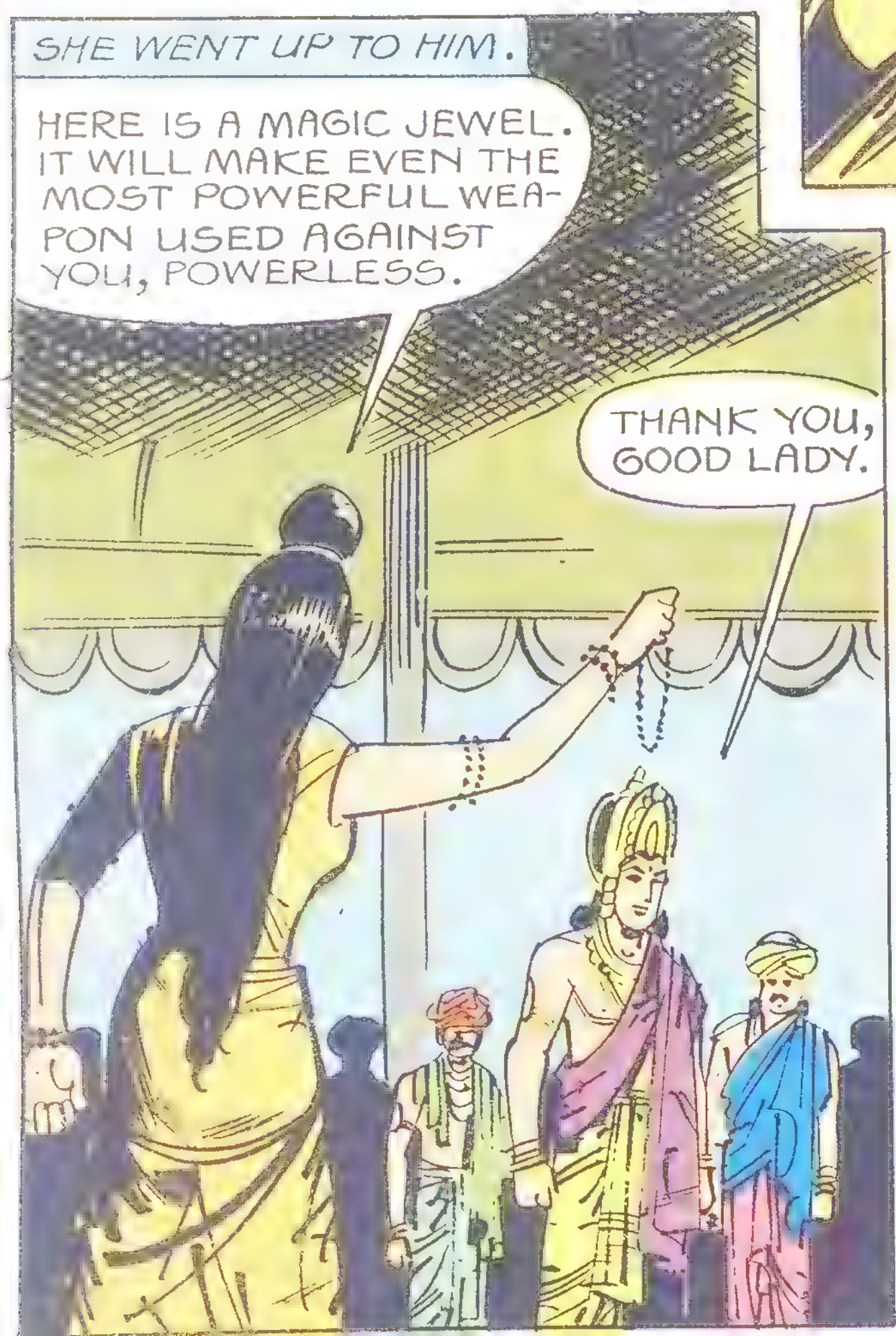
KING MEGHAMALI RETURNED TO VIDISHA WITH THE GOOD NEWS. HAMSAVALI WAS SENT FOR BY THE KING.

HAMSAVALI, YOU MUST REJOICE. YOU WILL SOON MARRY KAMALAKARA, THE PRINCE OF KOSALA.

COULD IT BE THE SAME KAMALAKARA?

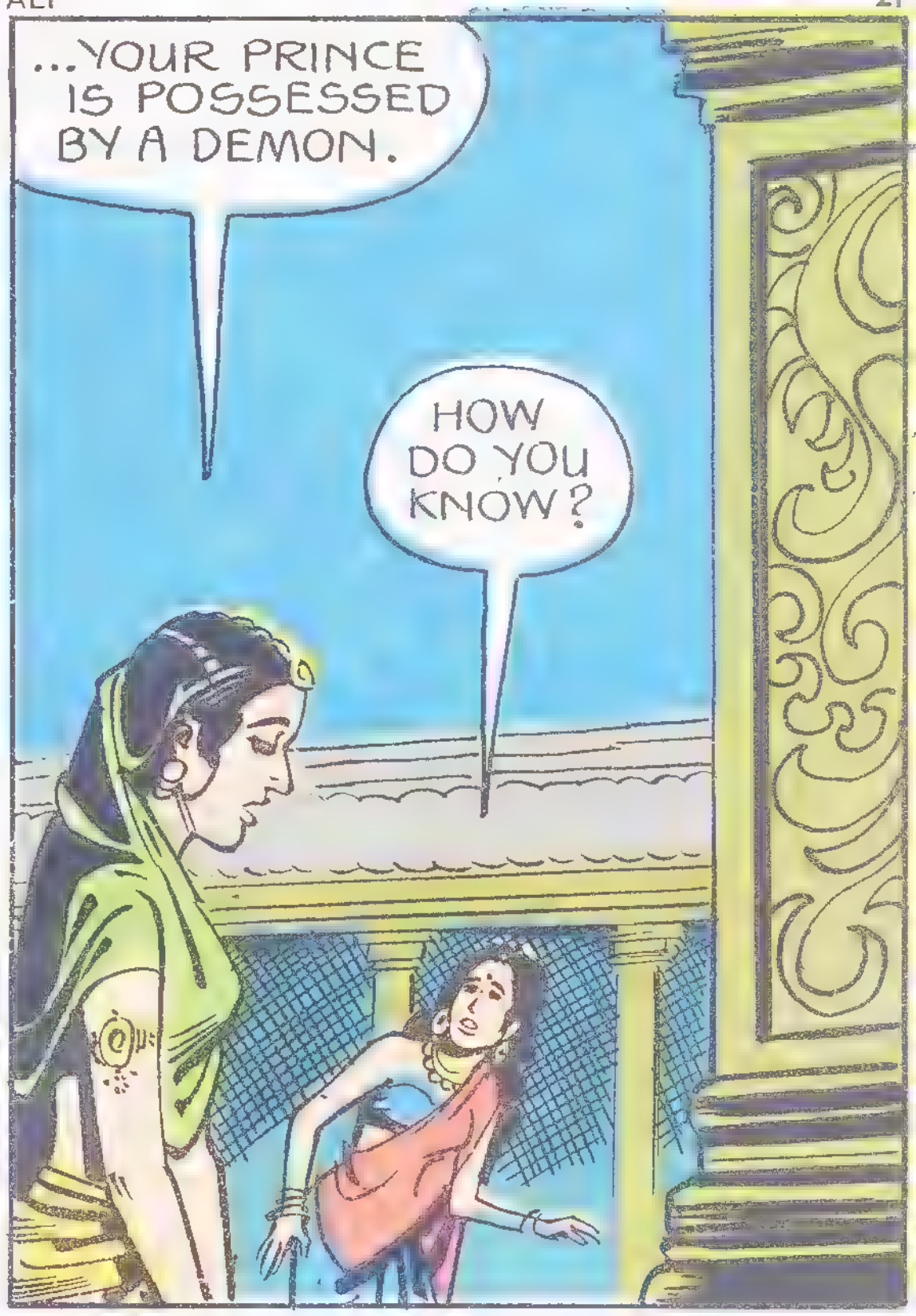

BUT HAMSAVALI WAS TROUBLED. SHE CONFIDED IN HER FRIEND—
KANAKAMANJARI, MAKE SURE THAT THIS PRINCE IS THE SAME KAMALAKARA.
I WILL GO MYSELF TO HIS CAMP. DO NOT WORRY.

DRESSED AS A FEMALE ASCETIC, KANAKAMANJARI ENTERED KAMALAKARA'S CAMP AND WAS SOON IN HIS PRESENCE.
HOW HANDSOME HE IS! HOW LUCKY HAMSAVALI IS!

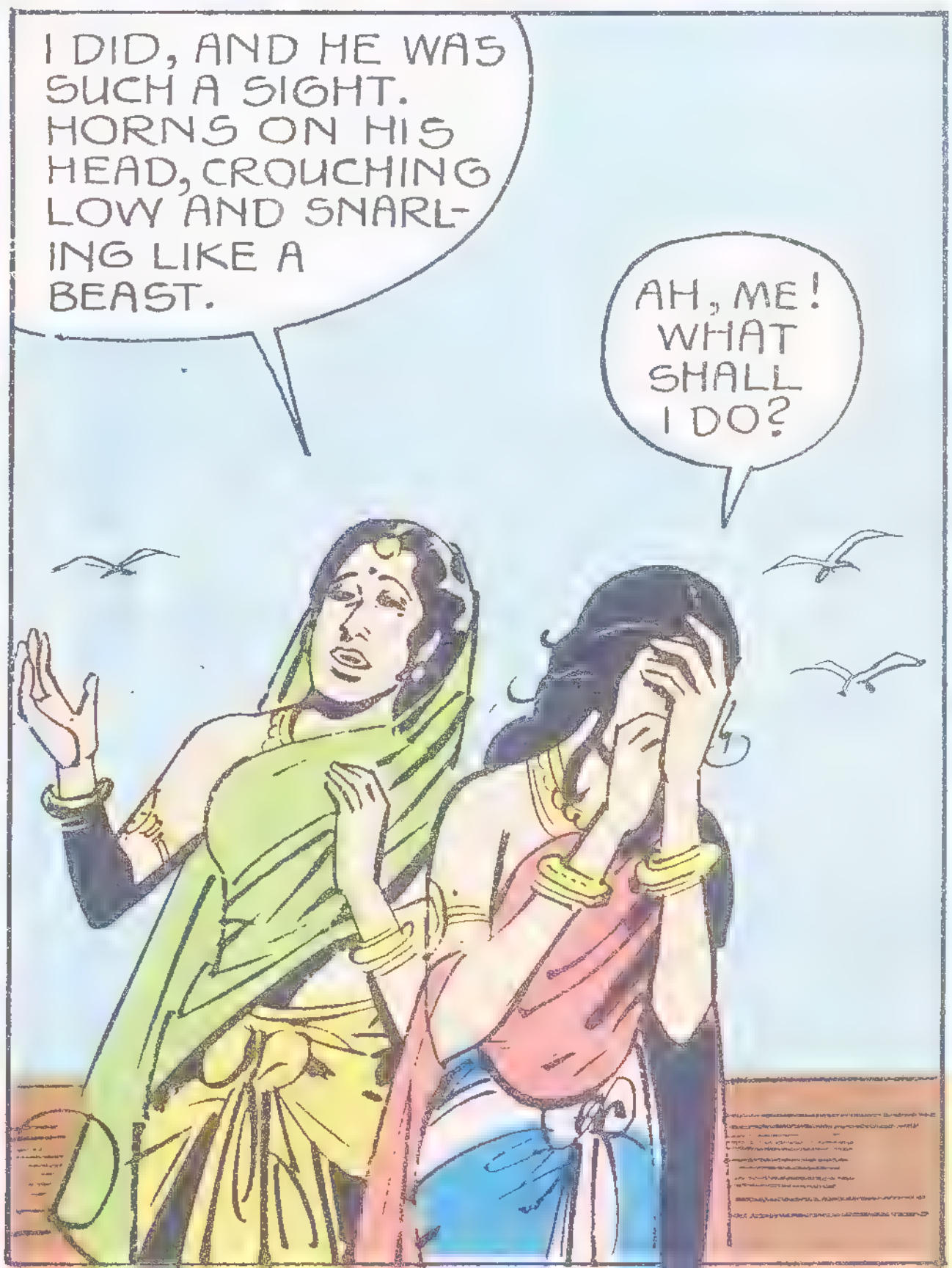

SHE WENT UP TO HIM.
HERE IS A MAGIC JEWEL. IT WILL MAKE EVEN THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON USED AGAINST YOU, POWERLESS.
THANK YOU, GOOD LADY.

AS SHE WALKED AWAY—
WHY SHOULD I NOT HAVE HIM? HE HAS STOLEN MY HEART AWAY!
AND THE WILY KANAKAMANJARI HATCHED AN EVIL PLOT.

SHE WENT BACK TO HAMSAVALI.
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO PALE? WHAT IS THE MATTER?
I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU...


...YOUR PRINCE IS POSSESSED BY A DEMON.
HOW DO YOU KNOW?

I WENT THERE DRESSED AS AN ASCETIC. THEY ASKED ME TO DRIVE THE DEVIL OUT OF HIM.
DID YOU SEE HIM WITH YOUR OWN EYES?


I DID, AND HE WAS SUCH A SIGHT. HORNS ON HIS HEAD, CROUCHING LOW AND SNARLING LIKE A BEAST.
AH, ME! WHAT SHALL I DO?

DO NOTHING. ON YOUR WEDDING DAY, LET ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS TAKE YOUR PLACE.

AND THEN?

SHE WILL MARRY HIM AND YOU MUST ESCAPE FROM THE PALACE.

YOU ARE MY MOST TRUSTED FRIEND. WILL YOU TAKE MY PLACE?

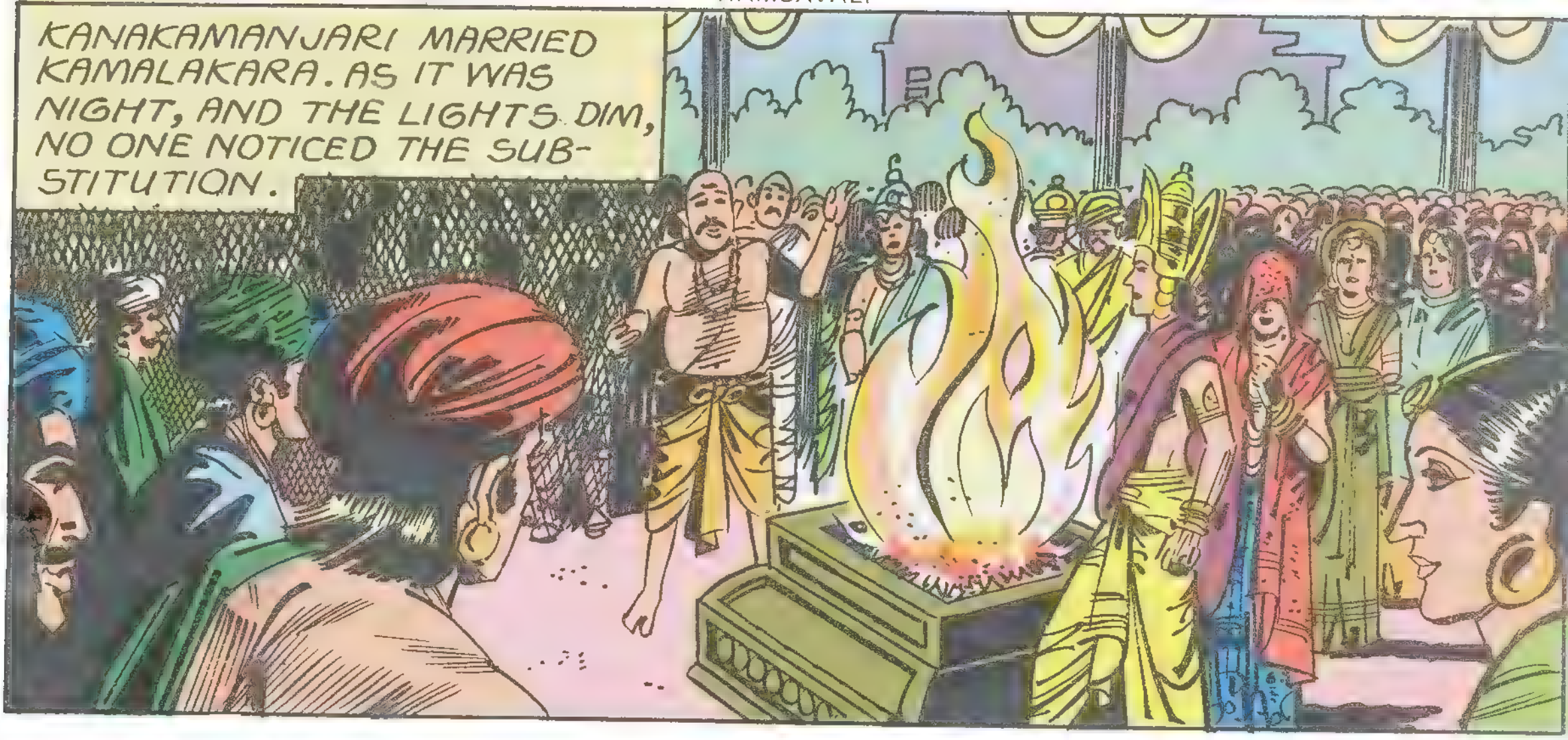
YES. I WILL.

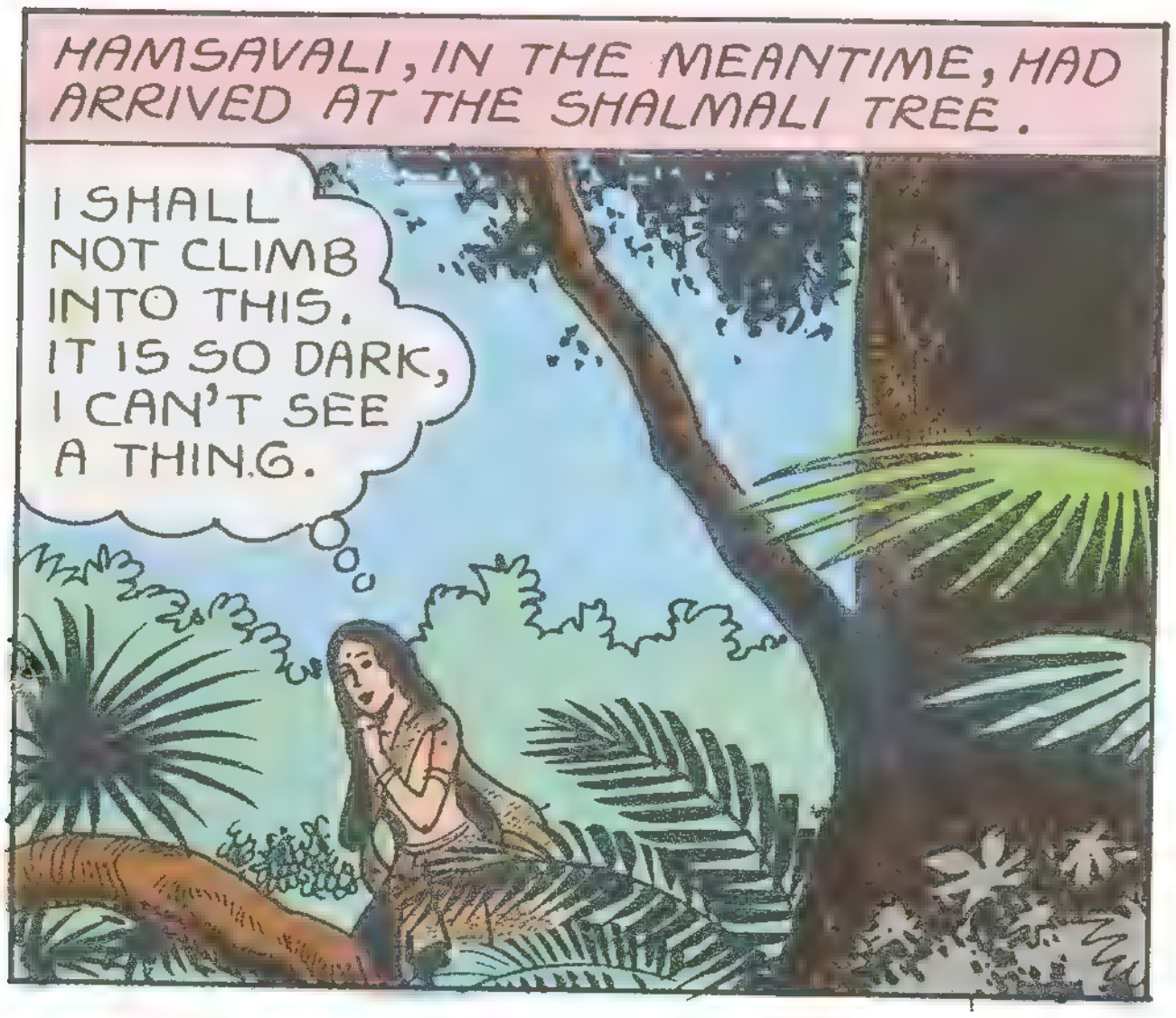
WHEN THE PRINCE ARRIVED IN PROCESSION, KANAKAMANJARI MANAGED TO GET THE PRINCESS ALONE.

LET ME GET INTO YOUR BRIDAL FINERY. YOU GET INTO THESE CLOTHES WHICH BELONG TO OUR FRIEND ASHOKAKARI.

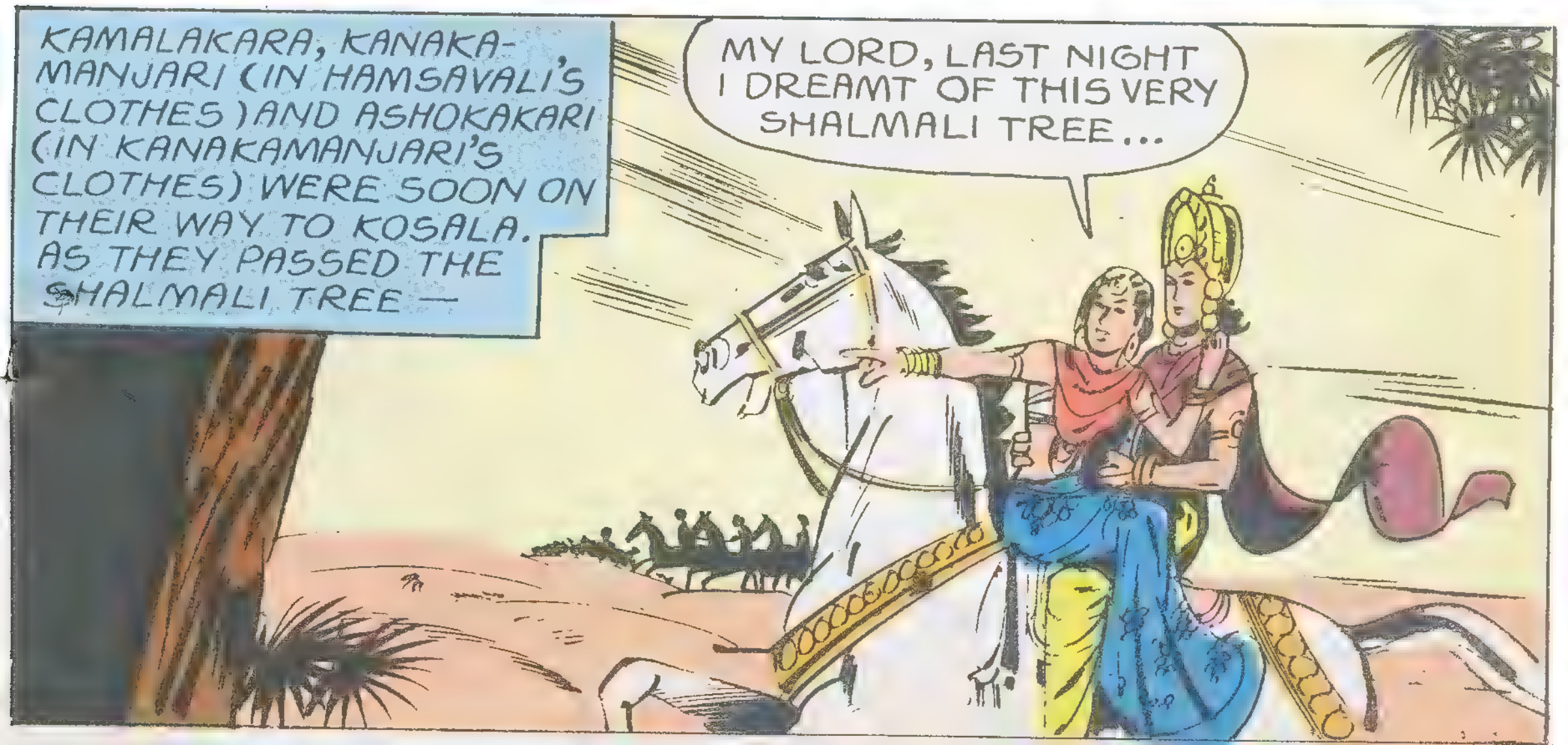
WHAT THEN?

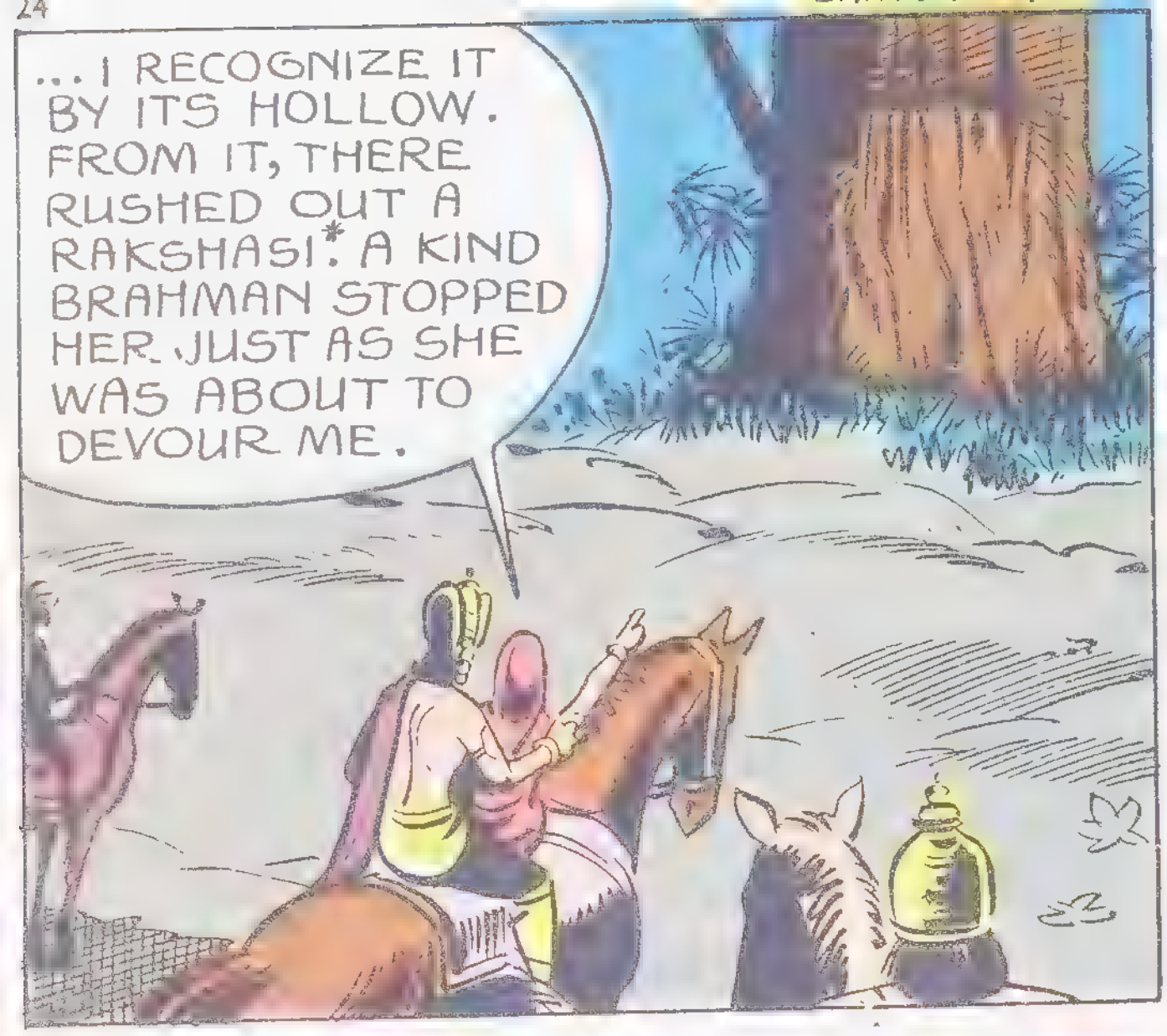
MAKE ASHOKAKARI GET INTO THE CLOTHES I'M REMOVING NOW, FOR SHE WILL HAVE TO GO WITH THE BRIDE AS KANAKAMANJARI. THEN, GO OUT BY THE WESTERN GATE AND HIDE IN THE HOLLOW SHALMALI TREE NEAR IT.

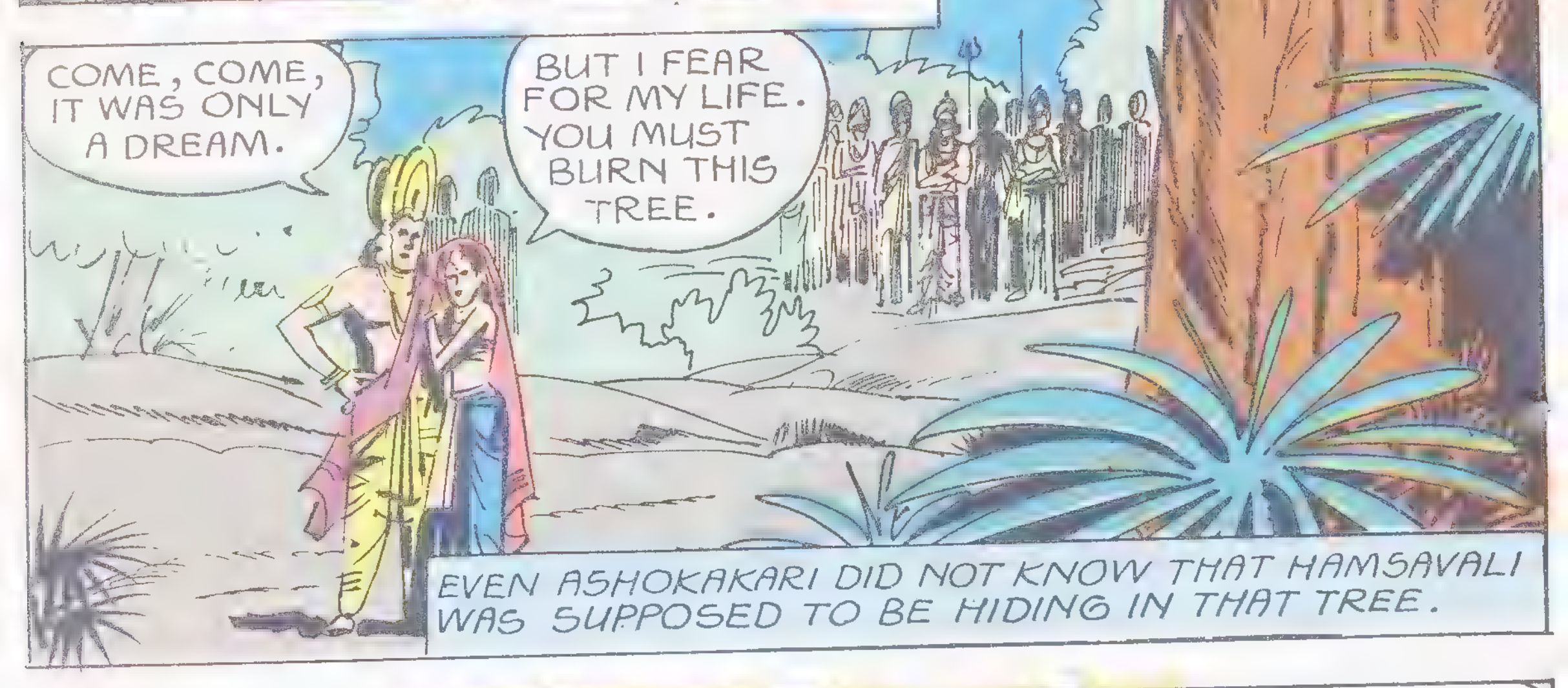

KANAKAMANJARI MARRIED KAMALAKARA. AS IT WAS NIGHT, AND THE LIGHTS DIM, NO ONE NOTICED THE SUB-STITUTION.

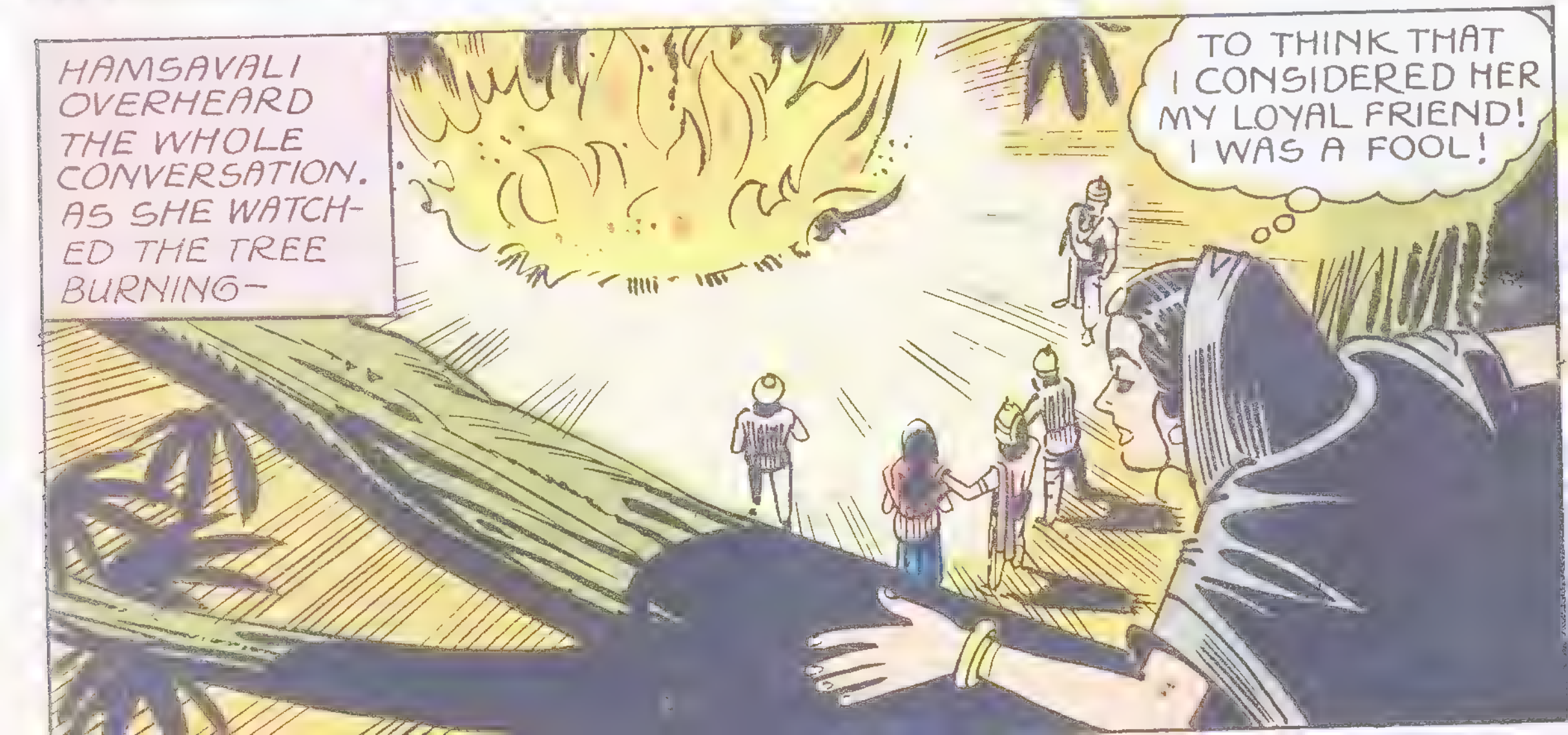

HAMSAVALI, IN THE MEANTIME, HAD ARRIVED AT THE SHALMALI TREE.
I SHALL NOT CLIMB INTO THIS. IT IS SO DARK, I CAN'T SEE A THING.

SO SHE CLIMBED UP ANOTHER TREE AND ANXIOUSLY WAITED.


KAMALAKARA, KANAKA-MANJARI (IN HAMSAVALI'S CLOTHES) AND ASHOKAKARI (IN KANAKAMANJARI'S CLOTHES) WERE SOON ON THEIR WAY TO KOSALA. AS THEY PASSED THE SHALMALI TREE —
MY LORD, LAST NIGHT I DREAMT OF THIS VERY SHALMALI TREE...

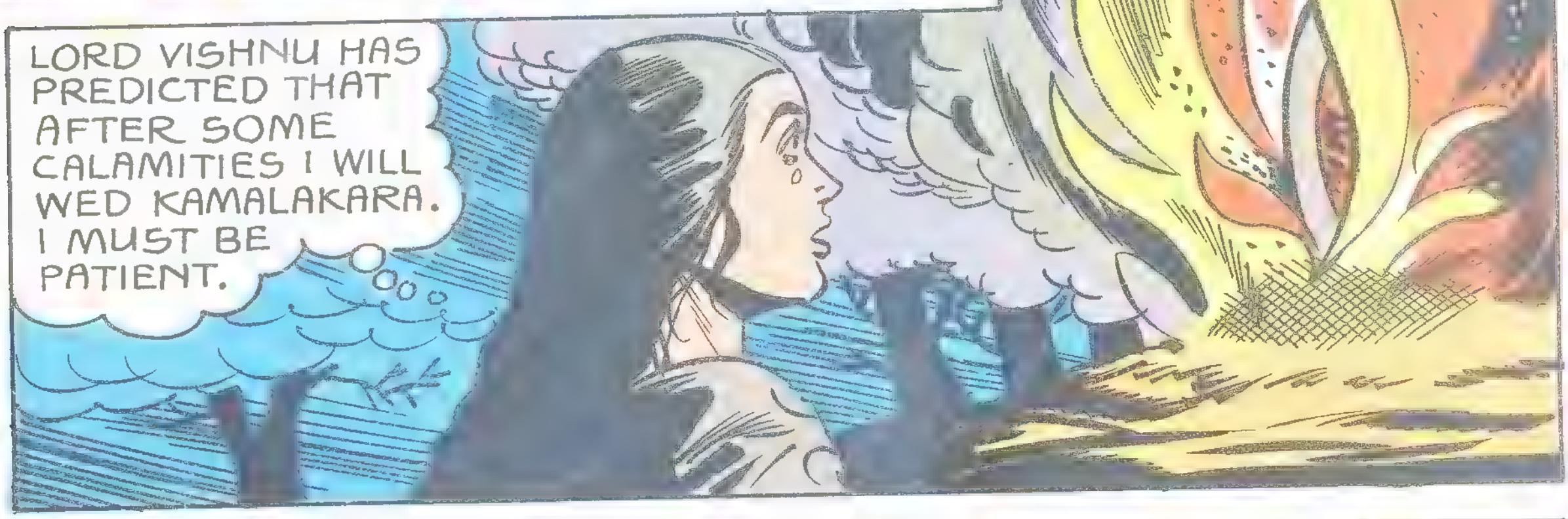

...I RECOGNIZE IT BY ITS HOLLOW. FROM IT, THERE RUSHED OUT A RAKSHASI*. A KIND BRAHMAN STOPPED HER JUST AS SHE WAS ABOUT TO DEVOUR ME.


COME, COME, IT WAS ONLY A DREAM.
BUT I FEAR FOR MY LIFE. YOU MUST BURN THIS TREE.
EVEN ASHOKAKARI DID NOT KNOW THAT HAMSAVALI WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HIDING IN THAT TREE.


HAMSAVALI OVERHEARD THE WHOLE CONVERSATION. AS SHE WATCHED THE TREE BURNING—
TO THINK THAT I CONSIDERED HER MY LOYAL FRIEND! I WAS A FOOL!

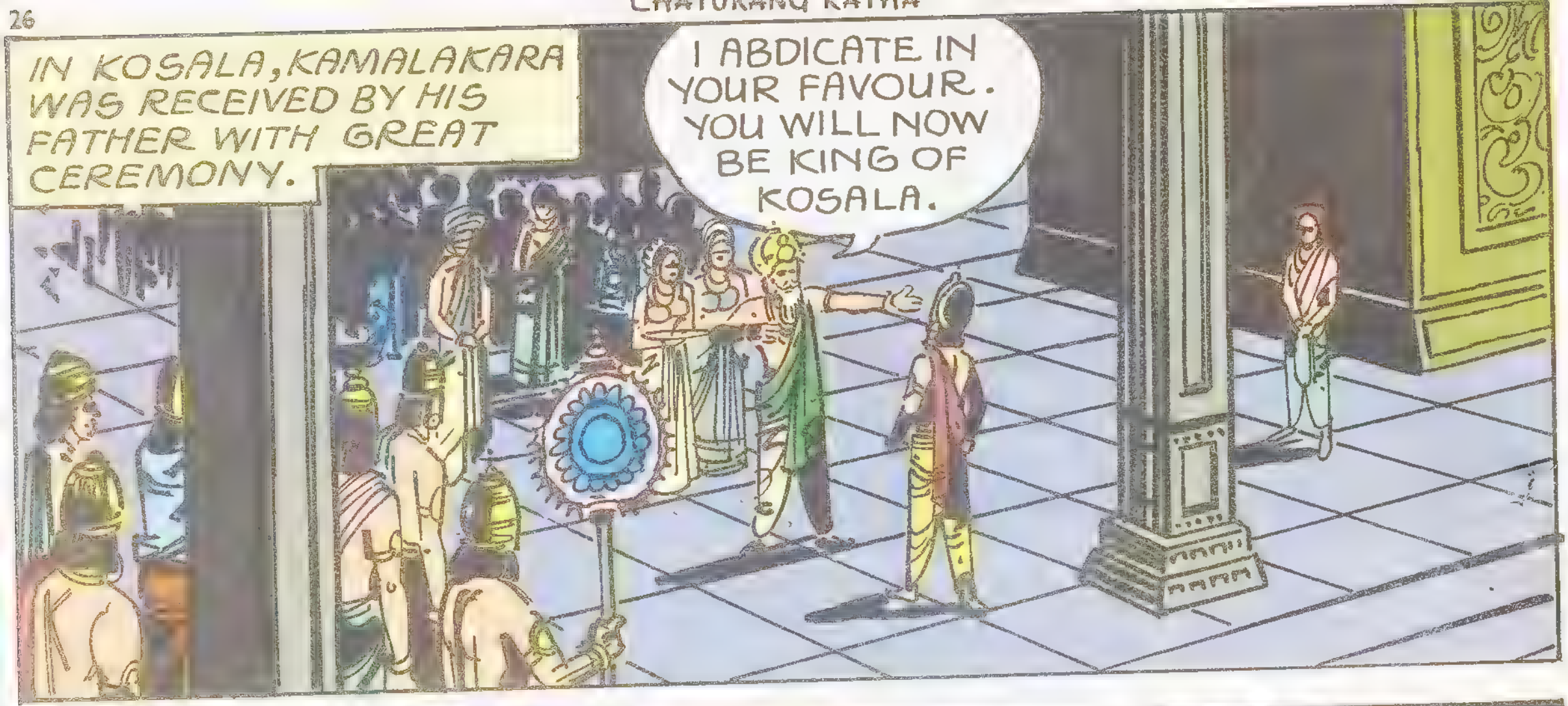
AFTER THE GROUP HAD PASSED ON-
I HAVE LOST A HUSBAND AND A FRIEND. I SHOULD THROW MYSELF INTO THE FLAMES OF THIS BURNING TREE!

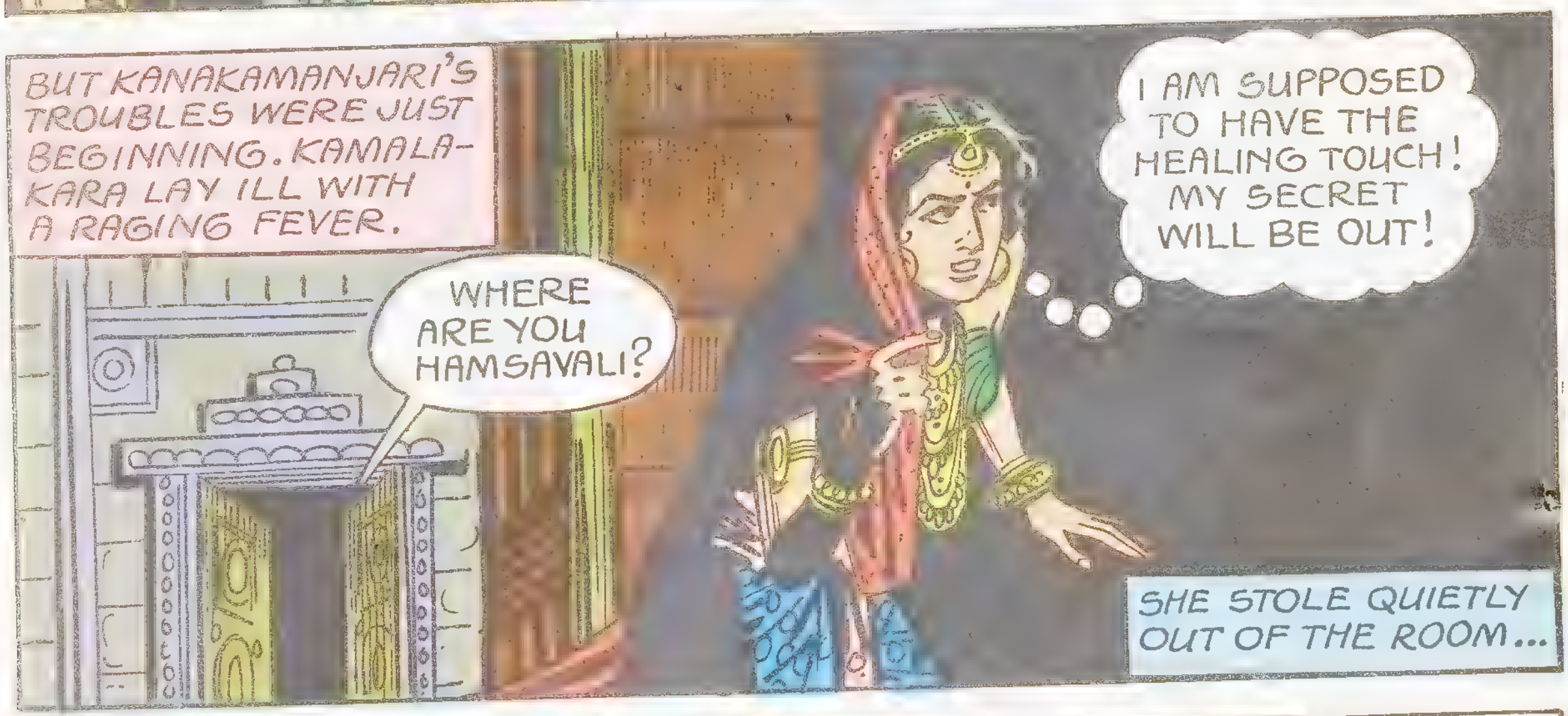
BUT CALMING HERSELF, SHE WAS REMINDED OF HER FATHER'S DREAM.


LORD VISHNU HAS PREDICTED THAT AFTER SOME CALAMITIES I WILL WED KAMALAKARA. I MUST BE PATIENT.

AND WITH THIS THOUGHT TO GIVE HER COURAGE, SHE SET OUT FOR A FOREST. AFTER HOURS OF TRUDGING-
I SHALL STOP HERE. HENCEFORTH, MY LIPS SHALL TAKE ONLY THE NAME OF VISHNU.

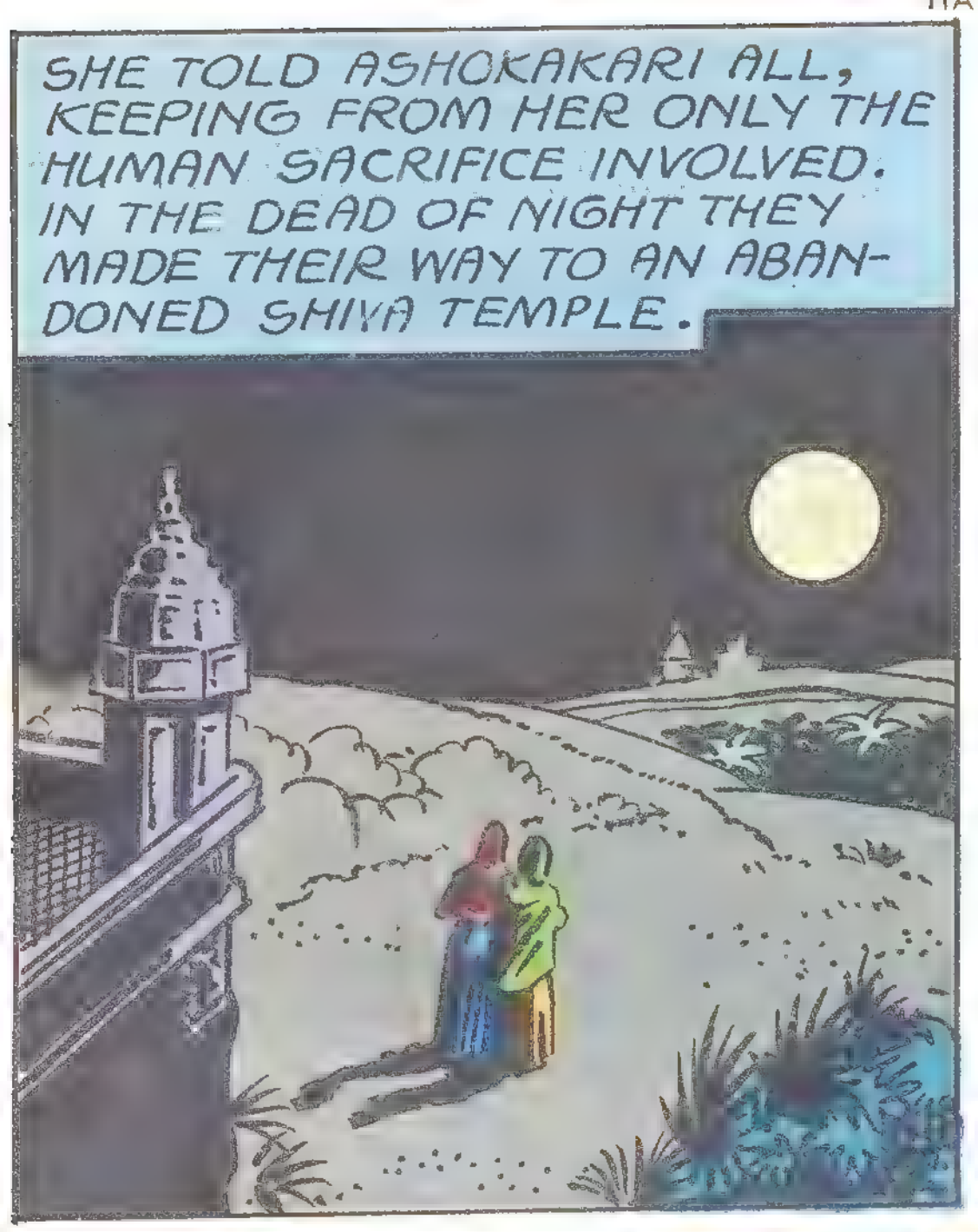
AND SHE LIVED THERE, WITH THE TREES FOR FRIENDS, HER EARS FILLED WITH THE SWEET SOUND OF BIRDS, HER HEART FULL OF LONGING FOR HER BELOVED.


IN KOSALA, KAMALAKARA WAS RECEIVED BY HIS FATHER WITH GREAT CEREMONY.
I ABDICATE IN YOUR FAVOUR. YOU WILL NOW BE KING OF KOSALA.

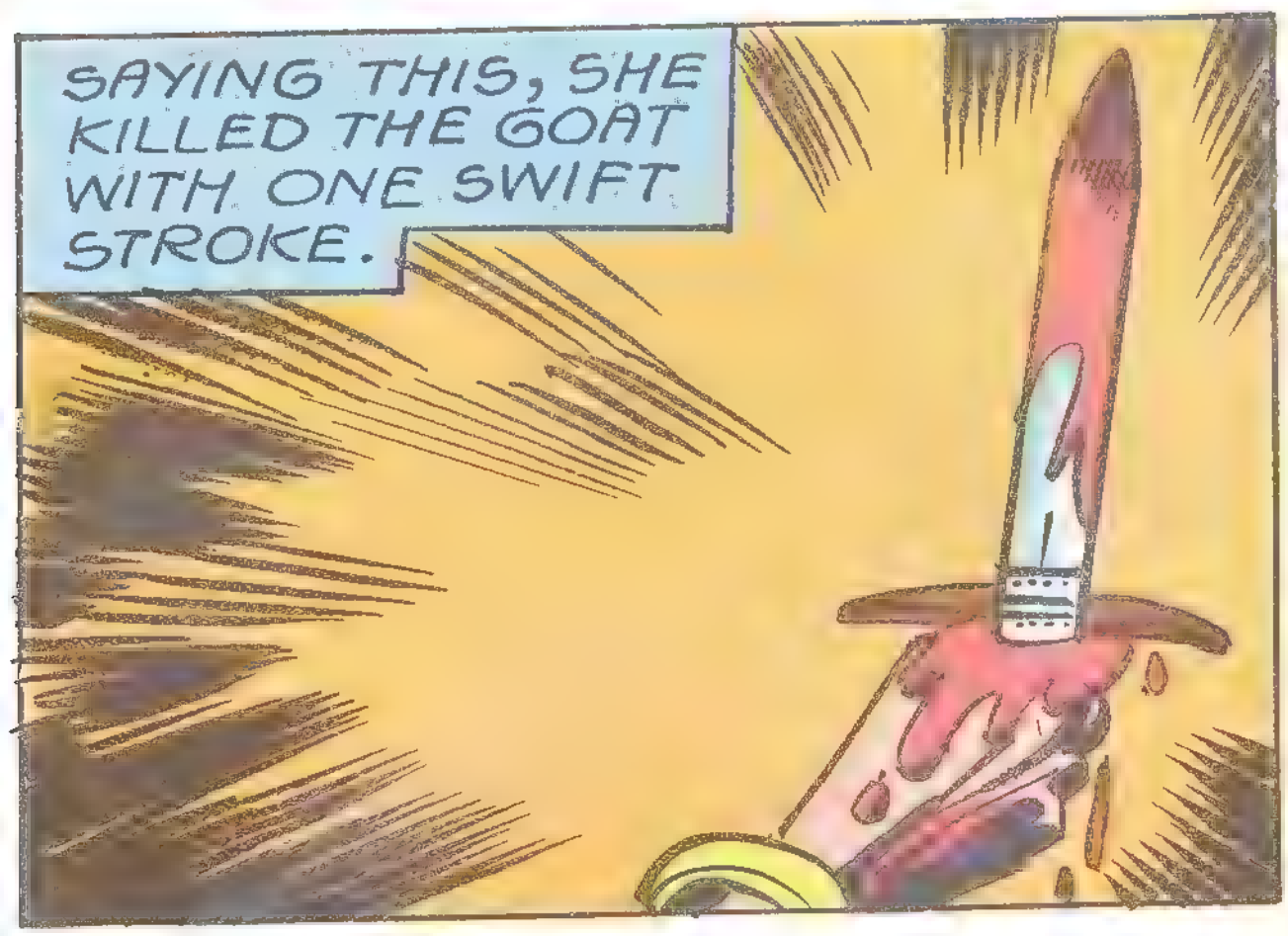

BUT KANAKAMANJARI'S TROUBLES WERE JUST BEGINNING. KAMALA-KARA LAY ILL WITH A RAGING FEVER.
WHERE ARE YOU HAMSAVALI?
I AM SUPPOSED TO HAVE THE HEALING TOUCH! MY SECRET WILL BE OUT!
SHE STOLE QUIETLY OUT OF THE ROOM...

...AND FOUND HERSELF MAKING YET ANOTHER EVIL PLAN.
I MUST PLACATE THE DEMONS OF FEVER. THIS WILL RE-QUIRE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, A HU-MAN SAC-RIFICE.

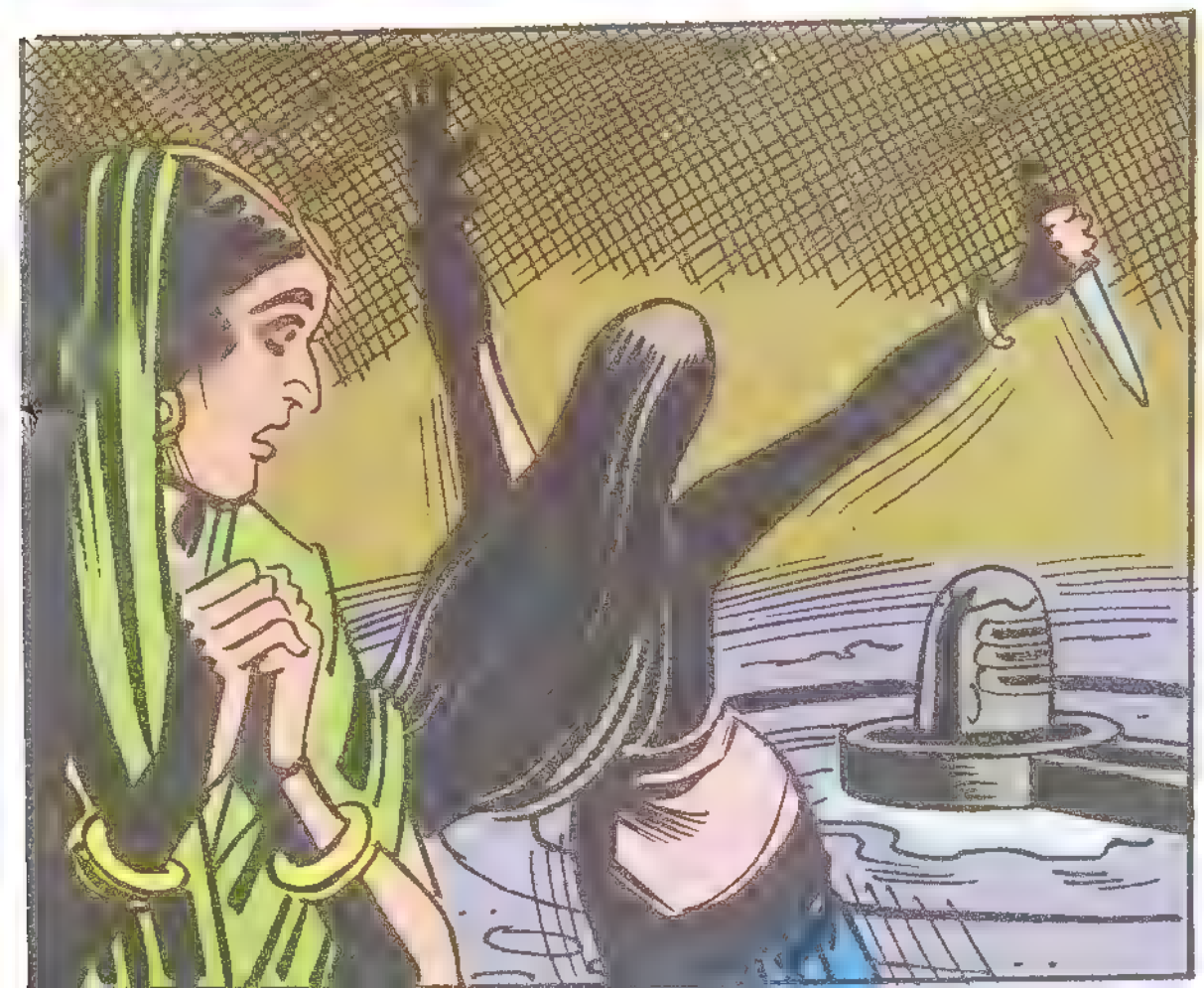
AND THE HUMAN BEING SACRIFICED WILL BE ASHOKAKARI!
THUS DID THE CRUEL KANAKA-MANJARI PLAN TO GET RID OF THE INNOCENT ASHOKAKARI, THE ONLY OTHER PERSON WHO KNEW HER FOUL SECRET.

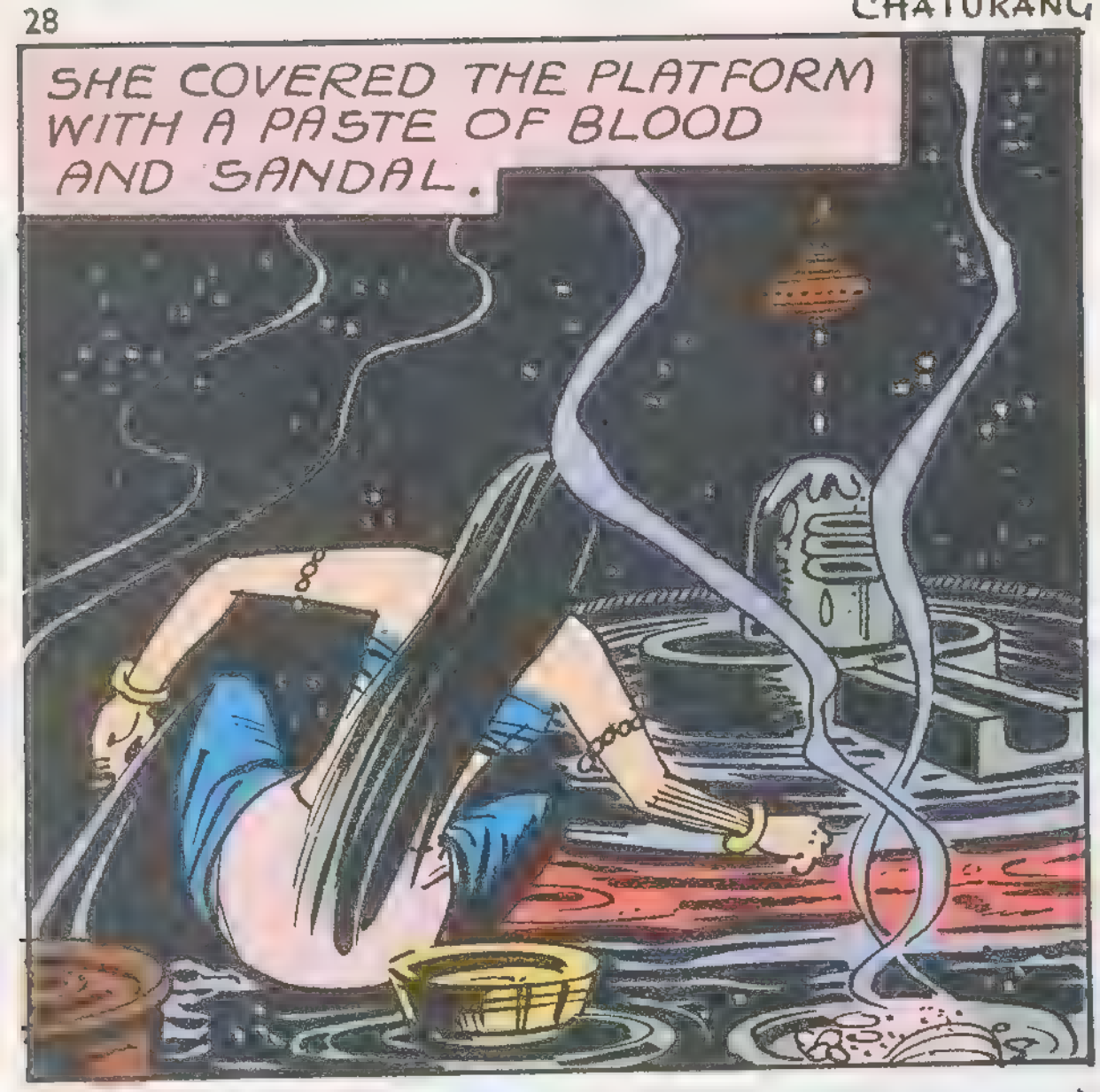

SHE TOLD ASHOKAKARI ALL, KEEPING FROM HER ONLY THE HUMAN SACRIFICE INVOLVED. IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT THEY MADE THEIR WAY TO AN ABANDONED SHIVA TEMPLE.

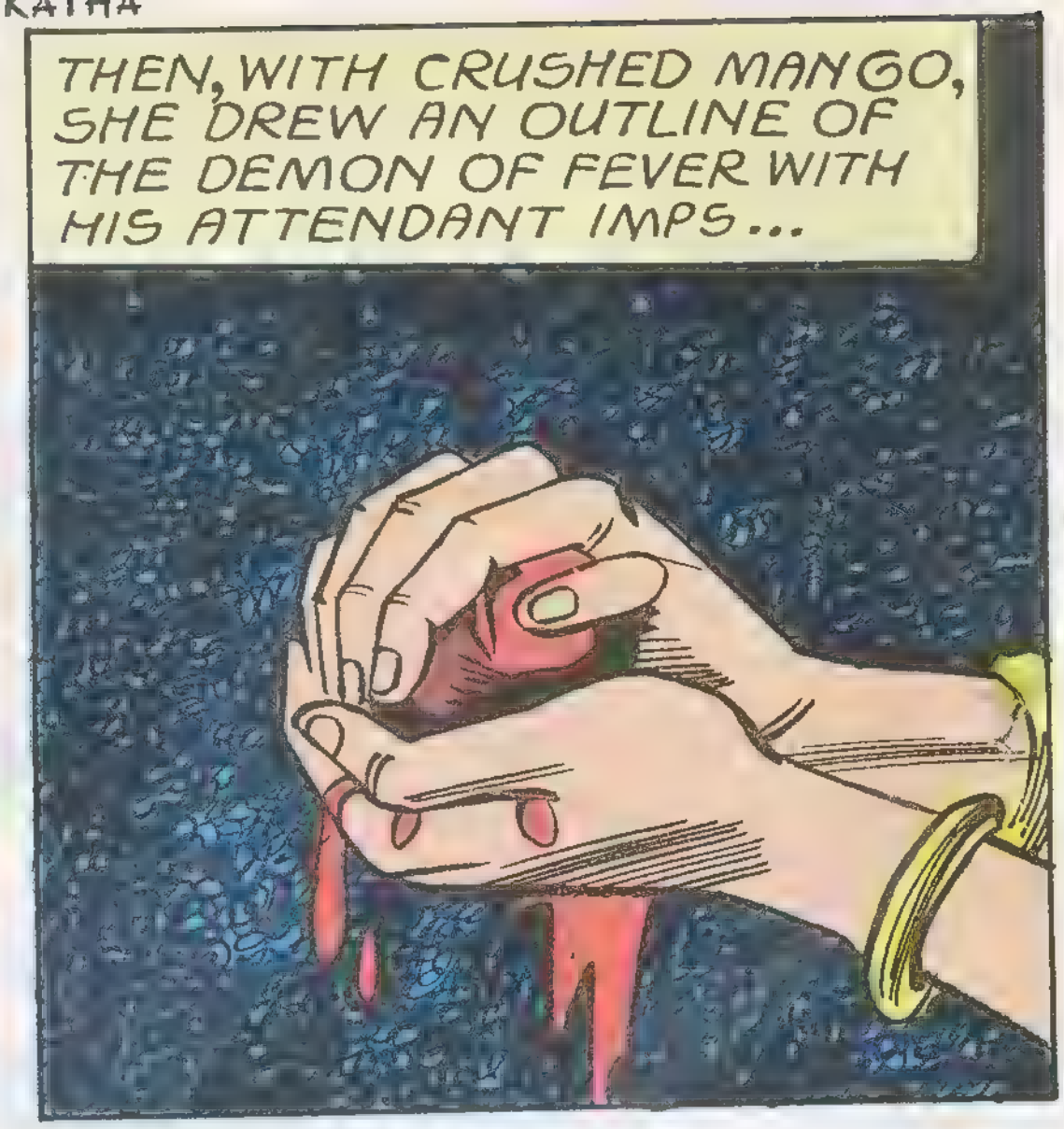
KANAKAMANJARI GOT THE SACRIFICIAL GOAT READY.
THE JACKALS HOWL, AND THE MOONLIGHT IS GHOSTLY. IT MAKES MY FLESH CREEP!
THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR CEREMONIES SUCH AS THESE!


SAYING THIS, SHE KILLED THE GOAT WITH ONE SWIFT STROKE.

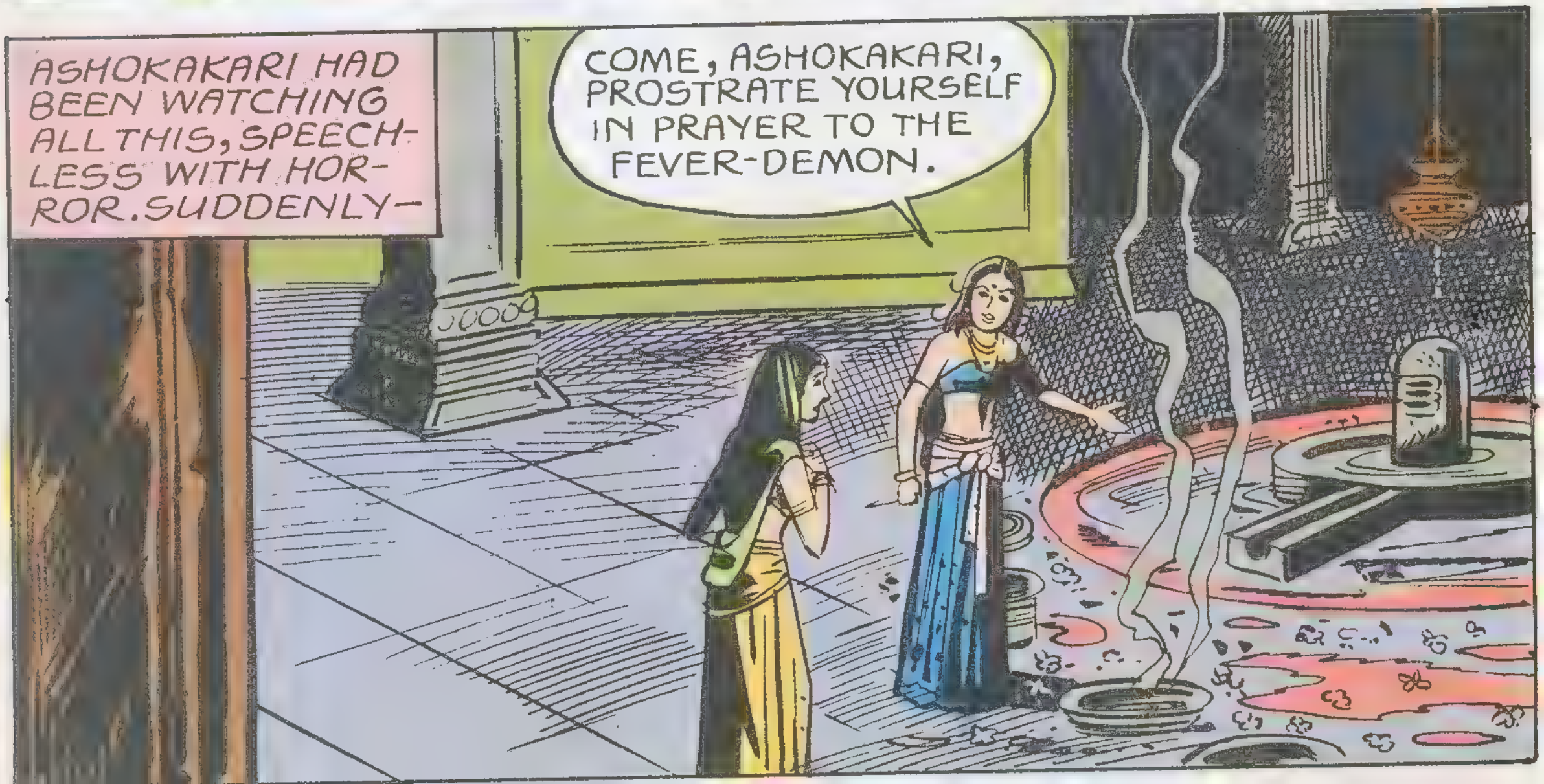
MORE RITUALS FOLLOWED.




SHE COVERED THE PLATFORM WITH A PASTE OF BLOOD AND SANDAL.


THEN, WITH CRUSHED MANGO, SHE DREW AN OUTLINE OF THE DEMON OF FEVER WITH HIS ATTENDANT IMPS...

...AND STEPPED BACK TO MUTTER THE MAGIC SPELL THAT WOULD SUMMON THE DREAD SPIRIT TO HER PRESENCE.


ASHOKAKARI HAD BEEN WATCHING ALL THIS, SPEECHLESS WITH HORROR. SUDDENLY—
COME, ASHOKAKARI, PROSTRATE YOURSELF IN PRAYER TO THE FEVER-DEMON.

SOON, YOU WILL SPEAK NO MORE. MY SECRET WILL BE SAFE FOREVER.

THE STROKE FAILED TO KILL. ASHOKAKARI REALIZED THE TRUTH IN A FLASH.
HELP! HELP! THE QUEEN IS KILLING ME!

HER CRIES RAISED AN ALARM AND BROUGHT THE PALACE GUARDS RUNNING.
THE QUEEN IS FAINTING!
SHE DESERVES TO DIE!

AND SOON, ASHOKAKARI TOLD KAMALAKARA THE WHOLE TRUTH, WEEPING WITH GUILT AND SHAME.
HAMSAVALI IS HIDING SOMEWHERE. HOW WILL WE EVER FIND HER?

WHILE KING KAMALAKARA LISTENED TO THE TALE WITH HORROR –

MY LORD, THE QUEEN IS DEAD!

SHE WAS NO QUEEN!

KAMALAKARA WAS FRANTIC WITH GRIEF. HE SENT FOR THE BARD, MANORATHASIDDHI.

I NEED YOUR HELP, AND NEED IT MOST URGENTLY.

I CAN GUESS, MY LORD. YOU ARE LOOKING FOR YOUR LOST LOVE.

HOW WISE YOU BARDS ARE! HOW SHOULD I SET ABOUT THIS TASK?

SHE IS A DEVOUT WOMAN AND SPENDS HER TIME IN PRAYERS AND MEDITATION.

WE SHALL SEARCH ALL THE FOREST HERMITAGES IN AND AROUND VIDISHA.

HIS MINISTER TRIED TO DISSUADE HIM.

MY LORD, THE KINGDOM NEEDS YOU.

MY BELOVED NEEDS ME MORE.

GUIDED BY MANORATHASIDDHI AND AFTER DAYS OF WANDERING, KAMALAKARA FINALLY REACHED THE FOREST WHERE HAMSAVALI SAT IN MEDITATION.

I WONDER...

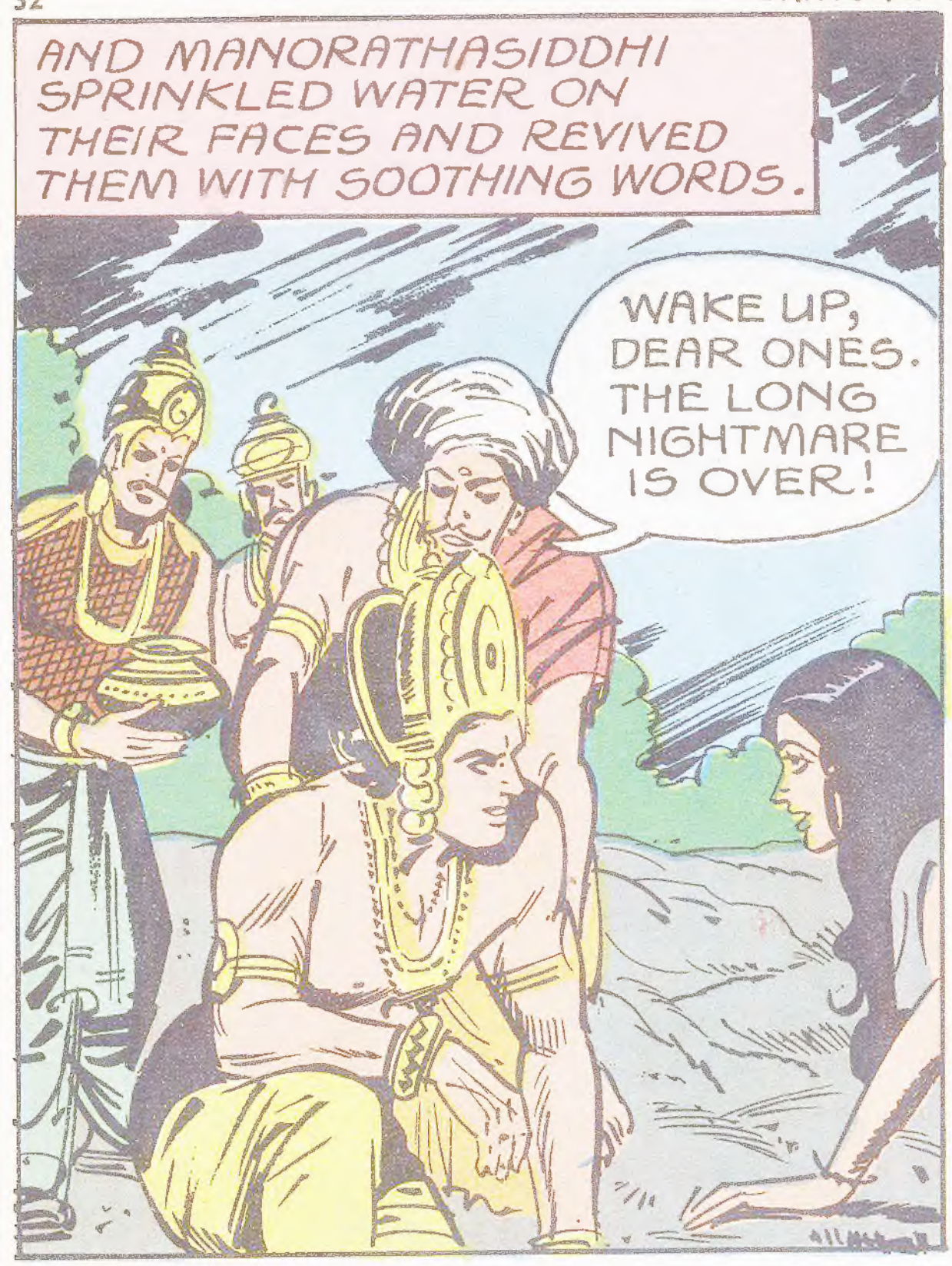
HAMSAVALI!

HEARING HER NAME CALLED, SHE OPENED HER EYES.

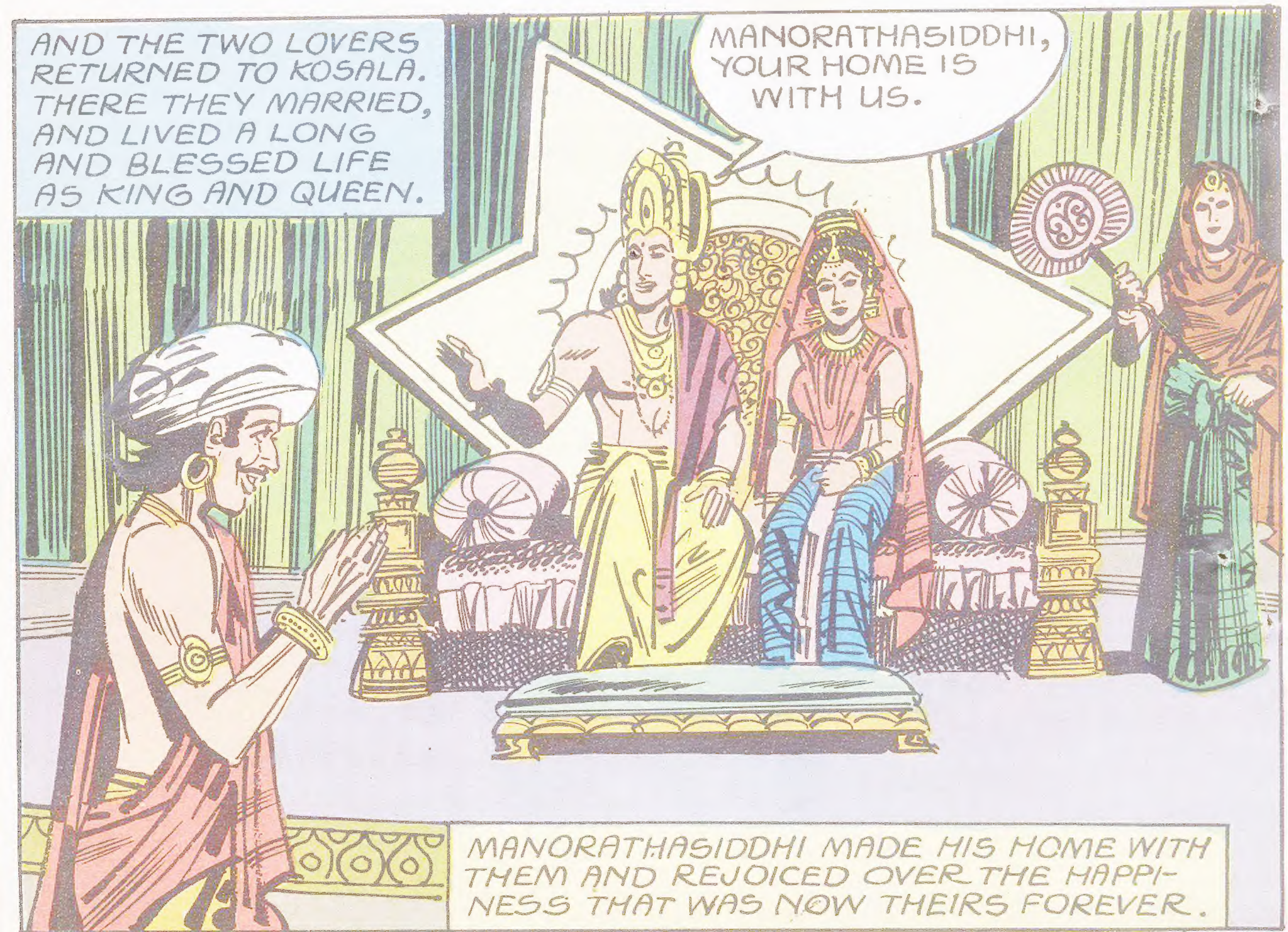
ALAS, MANORATHASIDDHI! I CAN BEAR THIS NO LONGER.

AND SHE FELL INTO A SWOON AT KAMALAKARA'S FEET.

UNABLE TO BEAR THE SIGHT OF HAMSAVALI SUFFERING SO GREATLY, KAMALAKARA ALSO FAINTED.

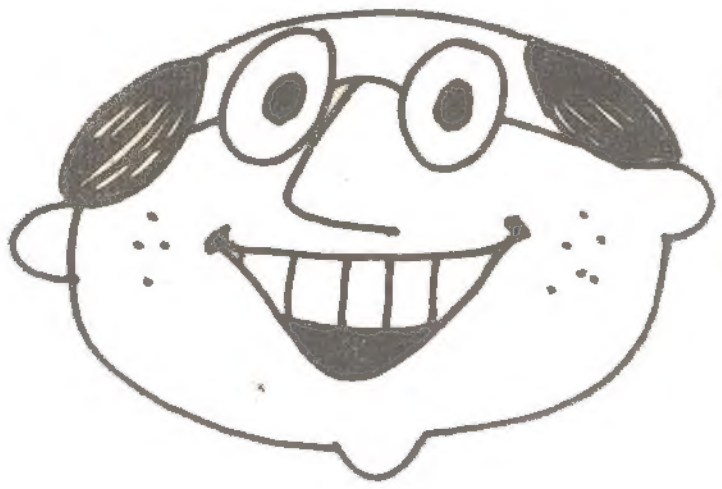

AND MANORATHASIDDHI SPRINKLED WATER ON THEIR FACES AND REVIVED THEM WITH SOOTHING WORDS.
WAKE UP, DEAR ONES. THE LONG NIGHTMARE IS OVER!

HAMSAVALI, I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD FIND YOU!
MY LORD, MY COURAGE HAD BEGUN TO FAIL ME!


AND THE TWO LOVERS RETURNED TO KOSALA. THERE THEY MARRIED, AND LIVED A LONG AND BLESSED LIFE AS KING AND QUEEN.
MANORATHASIDDHI, YOUR HOME IS WITH US.
MANORATHASIDDHI MADE HIS HOME WITH THEM AND REJOICED OVER THE HAPPINESS THAT WAS NOW THEIRS FOREVER.

HERE'S HOW MY DADDY LOOKS...

WHEN HE'S SEEING MY REPORT CARD...



WHEN HE'S HAPPY...

WHEN I BREAK A WINDOW PANE...

WHEN I FRIGHTEN HIM WITH A MASK OVER MY FACE...

SUCH FUN! TRY PAINTING YOUR DADDY—
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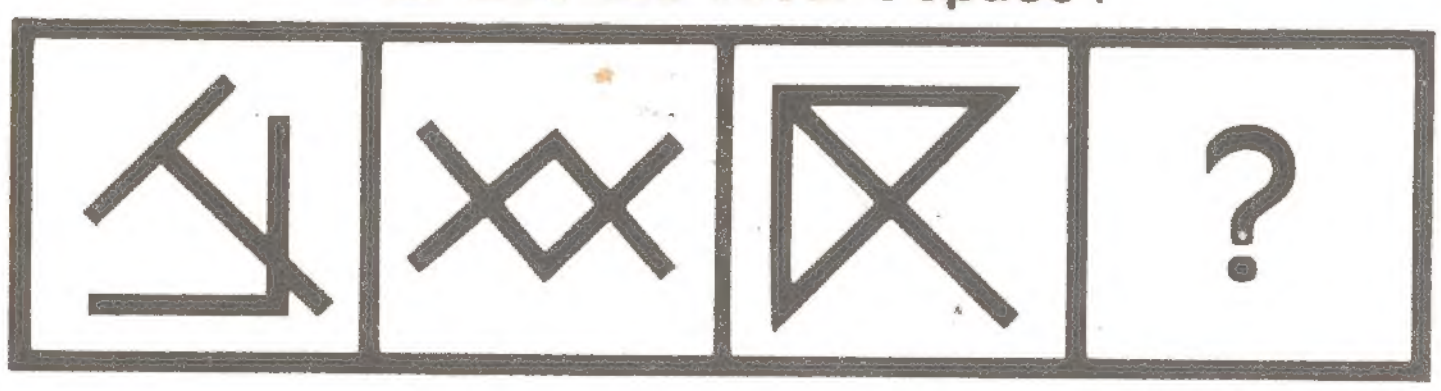
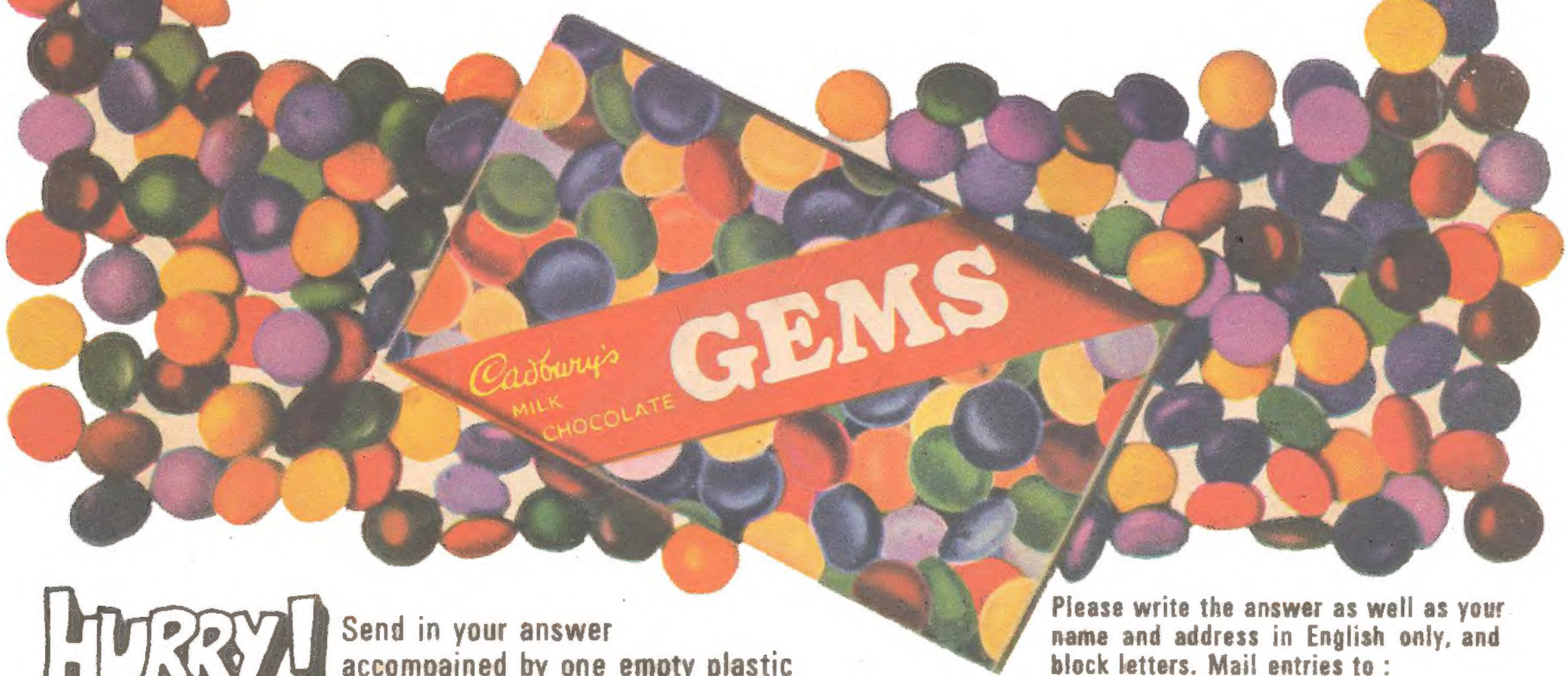
1009 LUCKY PRIZES TO BE WON

plus a chance to win extra bumper prizes!

Which of the five numbered figures fits into the vacant space?



1 2 3 4 5



HURRY! Send in your answer accompained by one empty plastic packet of Cadbury's Gems. The first 500 successful entrants will each get a State Bank Gift Cheque for Rs. 11 That means you also have a chance to win a bumper prize of Rs. 400 on your gift cheque—an extra bonus for the lucky ones!

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